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The Origin of the Rejected and Crippled Hero Myths

by

James Clark Moloney, M.D.

PART I

There is a child rearing procedure in common usage throughout Western civilizations that seriously interferes with the emotional growth of an infant. This procedure is conventionally stylized. Radical applications of this insalubrious method of child-care are detectable and suppressed. But subtle applications of the unhealthy practices are so commonplace they are seldom if ever observed. They go unnoticed. Even the Pavlovians have not focused emphasis on this abuse of the child's prerogatives.

This commonly used and harmful procedure in child-care is composed of two constituents. These constituents diametrically oppose each other. The first constituent entails a direct maternal ministration to the baby. The tending of one of his needs, such as feeding him when hungry, would be representative of the first constituent. The second constituent of the unhealthy child-care procedure is a withdrawal of the mother's attentions to the infant after the need that initiated her care has been attended.

In brief, in this culture, the maternal attention is an initial attention which is always followed by the subsequent loss of the mother. After she attends the baby's need, the mother disappears. At this time she is quite satisfied with herself and the sufficiency of her attentions to the baby. When she is in this state of high satisfaction with herself the mother is likely to become irritated if the infant makes further demands upon her. Ensconced in the eiderdown of outraged indignation, the mother develops irrational feelings.

In fact, she becomes so irrational that she feels she is being "put upon" by her baby. She just won't have it. When mother is in this frame of mind, it is almost impossible for the baby to retrieve her as a tender loving mother. If she becomes too irritable an emanation comes off the mother that gives the baby the colic. Perhaps this emanation is nor-adrenalin.

Many maternocentric mothers living in the Western Civilization can supply the first constituent of baby care in a relaxed sort of way. But after each ministration to the baby, attempts to get away from the baby stir up alarms in the baby. The baby's reactionary anxiety is hereditary. It is not the baby's studied plan to dominate the mother. The child's survival mechanisms are spontaneously generated by his being summarily dismissed from the mother's side, at a time when he is helpless to fend for himself. If he can't bring her back again, he goes into a panic. The panic is followed by an all out rage. The all out rage is a part of the total symptomatology of colic.

In Western Civilizations the mother attends the child when the child's needs summon the mother. After the ministration, the mother abandons the child. She feeds the child, then puts him aside. She wipes the feces from the buttocks of the child and then she puts the child aside. She puts the child to sleep by rocking him, then the mother puts him in a room — often a darkened room without another living soul in the room except the baby.

In tribal cultures and in the contemporary primitive cultures, the baby is not discarded after each maternal ministration. The Okinawans attend these needs of the child and in the meantime the mother carries the baby on her back. This rocks the baby; this warms the baby; this permits the baby to feel constantly the soft body of the mother. In addition, the baby can smell, hear and see the mother. All of his senses are contemporaneously, simultaneously, and continuously stimulated by the whole of the mother. The tribal mother is not only emotionally mature, she is infantocentric as well. In a calm way she keeps apace of the autonomous

needs and rights of her baby. She places the baby before her own pleasures. The mother is happy when the baby is calm and autonomous.

Of course, not all primitive cultures can achieve this refined degree of mothering. Sometimes most of the mothers in an ethnic group are emotionally disturbed and they provide the same type of disturbance pattern for their precognitive children. These children become congenial to the disturbed maternal climate, when the child becomes similarly disturbed as the mother. Conforming to the disturbed behavior of the mother is survival behavior for these children. Even though this disturbed behavior is not consistent with objective reality, it nevertheless constitutes psychic reality for the child.

Many primitive cultures are not cultures with a preponderance of emotionally mature adults. Being primitive does not mean that the babies of the culture will be afforded proper mothering. Primitiveness is not synonymous with maternal or emotional maturity. There are emotionally mature primitives and there are emotionally immature primitives.

The child loved from birth by a calm, emotionally mature mother evidences a sense of inward dignity. His autonomy respected, he develops a feeling that life and motivation spring from an inner font. Mother-protected during his timid and helpless years, he develops into and becomes an entity distinct from the mother and from the mother's world. He grows to look like, to feel, and to be the individual that his genes intended him to be.

However, at this point, it is necessary to depart from the direct theme. There is a condition to which babies are subjected that cannot be remedied by worried mothers acting "as if" they were basically mature. Further, a mature woman can be subjected to such aggravations from the outside during her care of the neonate, that she floods this neonate with a poisonous emanation. Perhaps this emanation is nor-adrenalin. Be that as it may, the baby is disturbed, constantly disturbed, by disturbances outside himself.

These disturbances are the "not him" part of his world. Because the baby is precognitive, he cannot separate the elements of disturbance from one another, nor assign the elements of disturbance to the proper spatial and temporal relationship to him. The mother and all things associated with the mother are suspect. The impact of these elements upon the baby constitute a gestalt. A future representation of any element of this original gestalt will trip the trigger of an all-or-none-conditioned reflex response contained in the sentience of the predisposed human. The future response of the predisposed human will be reflex and targetless.

For the normal mother made worried by real outside danger there is a remedy. The remedy for this condition is to remove the outside source of the mother's anxiety. If this is not possible, a warm, mature surrogate mother should be selected to substitute for the harassed mother. This is important because the closer the contact with the aggravated mother, the more intense the baby's disturbance and colic. This becomes an ingrained reflex that can be sprung by the proper stimuli anytime in the future.

It is important to labor this point. A mature woman cannot always effectively mother her child! This is emphasized because so many people in Western Civilizations believe that all that is necessary is for a woman to go through the motions of being a good mother. This mechanical mothering will not help the baby. It makes the baby neurotic. The basic need of the baby is to feel the presence of a mother whose attitude is constructively baby centered, to feel a mother who unconditionally loves the baby, to feel a mother who recognizes the need to protect the baby's autonomy, and to feel a mother who respects the baby and the baby's rights.

The baby is disturbed in Western Civilizations not only by the subtle neglects and abandonments that follow each maternal administration, but there develops somewhere in the baby an awareness that the mother wants to avoid him as much as possible. The baby senses her avoidance of him. He senses the mother's need to be rid of him.

When the avoided baby becomes cognitive, he feels un-

loved. As the cognitive era progresses he feels that he is unloved because he is unlovable. This is a catastrophic decision. This conclusion is forced on the child by the way the Western Cultures are geared to favor the mother. For instance, the child is often merely a by-product of the mother's need to be a mother. This baby is not important. He is tolerated by the mother just because the woman's cultural or social needs demand that she be a mother. The societal focus is upon the mother and is not upon the child. To generalize, Western Civilizations exploit the baby. The exploited child or the child that feels that he is unloved because he is unlovable fears for his survival. If he is not lovable then how will he survive?

A human need is the need for survival. It is hereditary: it is present at the time of the birth of the human baby. Following birth the baby lives in a strange new world. This strange new world might be friendly to the baby or it might be unfriendly. The new world might threaten the baby's existence. This strange new world might demand concessions from the baby. It is as if the world said: "Live life my way, live life according to my rules and I will not molest you."

Or this strange new world might be loaded with varieties of inconceivable dangers that could attack the newborn baby. Unless the newborn is vigilantly protected from these dangers, he dies. As a baby, he can't fend for himself. He is too helpless.

The new baby with the hereditary need to survive will be influenced and will be shaped by his earliest contacts with his environment. That environment might be warm, supporting, and protective. The environment might recognize the rights of the child, might respect the child's autonomy. The mother may be a relaxed, mature woman who loves her baby. Because the baby is respected and loved the baby feels lovable. He grows into an adult that feels lovable. Because he feels lovable he is not suspicious. He does not feel threatened. The question of survival seldom arises in his mind.

The baby that is born into a threatening environment in turn threatens the environment. The child that threatened the mother and cosmic mother-world does so reflexively. This is a survival mechanism that is not discriminatory. If the child feels that he is unlovable, his needs must seek after another way of surviving other than love. If he can't survive through love, then he will survive through power. This decision is disastrous. For it is not enough that he be powerful to survive; he must be all powerful. This is the source of his "efficiencyizing" of his life. All spontaneous feelings of warmth are wasteful; they become contraband. King-slave complexes develop in this power matrix and king-slave combinations dominate the power motivated cultures.

Abandoned, crippled hero myths appear in power cultures. There is no doubt that the theme of these stories evolves from the important human need to survive. Since the theme evolves from an important human need to survive, understanding the meaning of this human need is equivalent to understanding the most significant inward sources and drives of human behavior.*

PART II

The crippled, rejected hero is a unique concept. The vicissitudes of the hero's life have been sung in the sagas of almost every culture. There is an attention-riveting quality about this hero. No matter from whence he came, this ubiquitous male was stereotyped. Almost always his birth had been predicted. The hero was born to save mankind. Frequently he was the son of a virgin. If not the son of a virgin, then the hero's father was a god. Rather universally a jealous person in power — an uncle, father or grandfather attempted to kill the hero. To escape this menace, the hero was separated from his family. He was reared by strangers in a strange land. These heroes were crippled, as well as abandoned. Finally, the hero's day of destiny arrives. The hero returns and kills the brutal ruler, or the hero, after an upsurge of activity is himself killed. The hero's death is often a scapegoat death, serving the utilitarian purpose of

perpetuating life (Leviticus, Chapter 16, Verses 5-10) (1) (2). After he is dead, the hero returns to the earth that often rejuvenates him, effectuates his rebirth or resurrection (3).

A very confusing abstraction is connected with the themes subsuming crippled and abandoned hero myths. Often the hero was a god and was supposed to be immortal. At other times the hero was a demigod — he was half mortal and therefore subject to death. On other occasions the hero was a mortal and, like all mortals, was doomed to die. But it is precisely in this latter area that an abstract counterpart to the concept of the death of the mortal provides us with the clue that in the overall picture death was essential to continued living. Death was indispensable to eternal life.

Oedipus gouged out his eyes with the golden bangles from the dress of Jocasta, who was not only his wife, but was also his mother. The Old Testament describes an amazing number of patriarchs who were blind, or were going blind, at the time. The patriarch, through a ceremonial of "laying on of the hands," designated the son that was to succeed him. Despite the Mosaic Code, the oldest son was not always chosen as the successor.

There was a static sameness to certain aspects of this ceremonial procedure of patriarchal successorship that inspired attention. The blindness, or the going blind as the day was done, dictated the need of a successor. But this ceremony was often executed with casual allusions to or descriptions of the sun. The significance of the sun to sight is inescapable. In other words, the end of sight means death; the sight of the patriarch, the great eye that is the sun, is blind, is dead. It became increasingly evident that the life cycle of the patriarch was in some way interchangeable with the life cycle of the sun. The patriarch story told a second story. The second story dealt with the sun's abandonment by his dark mother and by his celestial associates. For the ancients did not know that the sun's bright light obliterated darkness and outshone the other stars. The patriarchal second story contained a distillate, the perpetuated story of the sun's rising, regaining its zenith power,

its brightness, its optimism, its final moody decline, its eventual loss of its sight at night. Like the eyes of the patriarchs, the great eye of the sun went blind.

The rejuvenation of the sun as it passed inside the earth was accomplished by a mystical revitalization. The sun was reborn each morning. The life of the sun was perpetuated. The declining parts of the life cycle of the sun are essential to the life parts. The life and death parts are intrinsic elements of a perpetuating cycle.

When the mortal dies, he repeats a part of his history that prepares him for continued life. This abstraction becomes even more confusing when it is discovered that even immortal gods die. They die and yet they live. Osiris was killed by Set. But Osiris, put together again, finally resided in the Nether World, where he aided Isis in the rejuvenation of the sun. Ra dies or half dies while embracing his son, Horus.

Generation after generation of gods were turned out by the demiurges. The old testament's blind patriarchs, the sun, the father at night, goes [up] into the mother, the earth. The father, once inside the earth, is rejuvenated. He becomes the new born sun. In this connection there is the father, the son (sun), the Holy Ghost. The spirit of life is renewed by the languishing dying sun-father's connection with the red fires of revitalization that burn within the core of the night mother.

Crippled and abandoned heroes were confusing subjects for study. Too often, the Medea, reviving the Aison theme, had not been distilled from these misleading Old Testament picture stories that subtly, abstractly, and actually attempted to transliterate all life out of death meanings into the solid pattern of predictability demonstrated by the sun's morning rebirth following his death at night.

Even though the patriarchs were from different generations, perhaps the repetitive similarity of certain aspects of the patriarch's life to death patterns represented an Egyptian residue. The first scholars that attempted to study Egyptian history knew very little about the static nature of the Eryp-

tian's way of life. These scholars were mystified by identicalness and similarity that occurred in the Egyptian accounts of two battles that were known to be separated by 4000 years (4). This was the Egyptian account of the battles, and so far as the Egyptians were concerned, there were not two battles. The two battles were not separated by 4000 years, because the Egyptian's time stood still. The two battles were the same battle.

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That the Hero was a saviour explained his ubiquity. Saviours are always very much in demand. But, the saviour role does not explain the similarities encountered in the various crippled hero myths. These similarities depend upon another factor. The strikingly similar characteristics of the saviour stem from combinations of animistic projections upon a solar element that is quite constant.

The biology of living things as they were known to the ancients was used to explain activities of the non-living things that were too distant to be apprehended. For instance, the sun was called, by the Hebrews C[S] hamash, after C[S] hamor the ass, the beast of burden (5).

In Polynesia, night is a sleeping woman (6). In Sweden, the longest night of the year is the night mother (7). Light as well as darkness is charged with animism. In Polynesia, the white rooster, Ortiz, the quail and the Kia Wea Kia Wea birds were dawn's first evidences of light (8). The dove is the Holy Ghost that enlightens the world with tongues of fire. The word tongue couples the Holy Ghost with the mouth. This is an animism.

Animistic attributions are products of the human psyche. Outside the human psyche, animism does not exist. This fact is often and easily overlooked. It is overlooked because the projected animism is customarily witnessed, felt, and evaluated as an external phenomenon. This is customary. Even if paranoid, it is usually much more comfortable to look at the painful "outside" than to look at the painful "inside." This outside looking seduces us into forgetting the intrapsychic source of the animistic projections.

The psychic subjective component of animism is projected onto inanimate objects, natural phenomena, and planetary systems. The animistic projection is re-evaluated by the intellectual constituents of the psyche. This step is important. Because of the nature of animism, the stories in myths are as rich in psychodynamics as are dreams.

Fear subsumes this type of mental functioning, this need for oceanic familiarity, comprehension, and control. Animism, once established, facilitates processing by subsequent psychic manipulations. For instance, animism can be processed by ritual. Animism can be immobilized by idolatry. Animism may be conceptualized as a get-atable religion. Animism might be seduced by magic or by the exorcism of devils.

For a good reason, animism has been written into the cultural record of man, by man. Because of the philosopher's oceanic aspirations, they wrote into the biography of various generations oceanic concepts. The descriptions of these concepts preoccupied the attentions of philosophers extant in each succeeding generation. Frightened by the spectre of death, the dour philosophers occupied themselves with schemes of power - THE POWER - the special power, the power that transcends life and death.

This *stuff* worked over by philosophers is a derivative of power. This stuff contains the infinite, universal contrasting symbolizations for the strong and for the weak: the strong live; the weak die. And there is none so strong as the sun. No matter where on earth the sun is studied, it is born out of darkness. Weak at first, it gains zenith power — then wanes and dies and is buried in the western darkness. But it has a record of predictability. In the morning, the sun is reborn — resurrected, a powerful saviour from the coldness of the everlasting death. The sun is a symbol for everlasting life. The nocturnal death of the sun provides the spark of the new life that recharges this mighty hunter, the sun.

The customs and manners of living are different in the different groups that view the sun from different parts of

the world. Because of the long winter nights, Santa Lucia of Sicily, the saint of light, the patron of the blind, favored Sweden's winter solstice with an ecstasy of hope (9). Because of the differences in the geographical areas in which the observations were made, the observations were vested with minor dissimilarities. These differences evolved from cultural differences in custom and beliefs. It is the same sun that is seen by all men. Because human beings are what they are, they come to the same general conclusions about the lonely crippled hero, the sun.

Even though fear brought about the animistic projections of ancient man upon the sun, the ancient man was eventually elated by the day and night and by the seasons' predictable operation of the sun.

PART III

Ishmael was a wild ass of a man (Genesis, Chapter 16, Verse 12). Rejected by his father, Abraham, he was discarded to the arid heat of the wastelands. The overhead cover was skimpy and Ishmael languished as the sun burned a torrid hole in the sky. This story featured a spectacular coexistence. Ishmael, tucked under a bush by Hagar, sweltered as the sun hurled violent rays against the earth (Genesis, Chapter 21, Verse 15). Ishmael and the sun were simultaneously represented. Ishmael and the sun were treated as if they were separate and unrelated objects. In reality the sun and Ishmael were one. Ishmael was the sun.

Samson walked the road to Timnath. A lion attacked him. Samson killed the lion with his bare hands. The lion rotted where it fell. Time passed by and the bees made a hive and honey in the dead carcass (10). The honey, the yellow golden amber tears, the ambrosia of the gods, is best under the sign of Leo (11).

The lion and Samson appeared together in the same scene. Each one was the sun. Leo was the hot, destructive sun of mid-summer. The beneficent late summer sun replaces the torrid sun. The beneficent health-giving sun kills the destructive sun (12). Samson and Leo, both suns, are

comparable to Ishmael and the sun. Both were suns, and Ishmael, like the sun and like Esau, was a hunter. Ishmael, rejected, was ordained to be a hero, a crippled hero (Genesis, Chapter 21, Verse 15).

Samson's arms were bound with flax. The flax strands caught fire and burned away. Samson was free. He grabbed the jawbone of a rotten ass and slew one thousand Philistines (13). Before this escape, Samson had been affixed with brass trappings to the spokes of the milling wheel (14). He had been tied down like a beast of burden (15). The stately Samson — rejected, weakened, and crippled — was humiliated by the servile degradation. He had become the ass, the beast of burden that walked around and around the milling wheel as the mills of the gods ground slowly (16). The ass, too, walked in a never-ending circle.

Samson slew one thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an Ass. The Bible conjures up a picture of a man, powerfully built, swinging a jawbone, smashing the skulls of the Philistines (Judges, Chapter 15, Verses 15-16). This impression is inaccurate. At Remathlehi (17), Samson hurled the jawbone of the ass. Lehi means the jawbone but Remath means to hurl. He hurled the jawbone. He did not grip it as a bludgeon. Often rejected, often crippled, like daylight, Samson waxed and waned. His name was derived from the Hebrew. It means "little sun"!

Balaam, a prophet and thereby a hero, rode an ass at night (Numbers, Chapter 22, Verse 25). The ass balked. Balaam forced the ass to ride into a narrow defile. Again the ass balked. An angel of the lord loomed up before him. The ass veered to one side and crushed Balaam's leg against the wall of the darkened cleft. Then Balaam was crippled and alone.

Similarities insinuate the fabric of the three Biblical stories. References to the ass, to the state of being rejected and to a weapon are encountered in each narrative. Ishmael was a wild ass of a man. He was a hunter who shot arrows. Samson was substituted for an ass at the revolving milling wheel. His weapon was the jawbone of the ass. Balaam

rode an ass. The angel blocking the defile was armed with a sword, like the cherubim who guarded the eastern gate of paradise (Genesis, Chapter 3, Verse 24). All three were rejected; all three were injured, crippled; all three became famous.

Ancient animism bound the unknown to the known. In this animism the sun was an animal. The sun followed the same path each day. The sun revealed no unpredictable idiosyncrasy. The sun was not autonomous. The sun was an animal, a particular kind of an animal — a beast of burden, a beast with a controlled itinerary. The sun always circled the same runnel. The ass, C[S]hamor, at the milling wheel circled the same path. The sun was called C[S]hamash. This word C[S]hamash originally meant servant. The ass C[S]hamor and the sun C[S]hamash were the same. The wild ass of a man, Ishmael, who hurled arrows — days of death-dealing light and the sun were identical. Today the vergers in Jewish synagogues are known as Shammash, a servant.

Pursuant to the Balaam, Ishmael and Samson continuity, a pattern develops. A common denominator subsumes the bush under which Hagar placed Ishmael, the hair on the head of Samson, the sword in the hands of the angel that discouraged Balaam's ass, the jawbone of the ass, the arrows of the archer, Ishmael, the flaxen thongs that bound Samson's arms. This common denominator is the rays of the sun.

Civilized ancients and intelligent primitives did not understand the nature of the rays of the sun. Then, as today, the morning circumference of the sun was sharply delineated. The rays were missing. Torn from mother earth, the newborn sun was separate and alone. The new infant was weak, weak because its full fire strength had not been reached. The heat of the day had not yet set in. The sun was beginning to be a rejected hero.

As the sun approaches its zenith, the circumference blazes with fuzzy streamers. The civilized ancients and the ancient primitives accounted for this fuzziness in many ways. The fuzziness had been designated as hair (19), cobwebs

(20), ropes (21), strands of flax (Judges, Chapter 15, Verse 14), hairy mantles (Genesis, Chapter 27, Verses 14-32), fish hooks (22), jawbones of the progenitors (23), jawbones of the ass (Judges, Chapter 15, Verses 15-17), the branches of bushes and trees (24), perhaps the burning bush (Exodus, Chapter 3, Verses 2-3-4), the jawbone of Maui's ancestress (25), the jawbone of Maui's son (26), the jawbone of a shark (27), the Polynesian Kana (28), the lower jaw of Ganesha (29), the lower jaw of African kings (30), the lower jaw of Agonashi — Jizo (31), the ankh (32), the sinews that latch the sandal (33), the hairs of the mons Veneris (34), the sinew from the thigh vein (Genesis, Chapter 32, Verse 31), the wheel (35), the dragon's tooth (36), pillars (37) (38)(39) and gates. Yet this does not exhaust the list.

The ancients divided these streamers into two categories. One category considered the strands as emanations from the sun. The other category considered the strands as entities extraneous to the sun. This second category, materializing out of the welter of ancient information, was spectacularly astonishing. Nevertheless, the observations justified this point of view — the point of view that these strands were a thing apart from the sun. The sun on the matinal horizon is free of streamers. The sun at its zenith is covered by a mat of streamers. Where did they come from? The ancients believed that the streamers emanated from the sun. Other observations supported the idea that the streamers were external to the sun, a thing apart from the sun. The ancients divided the streamers external to the sun into two groups. One set of streamers was consumed as soon as the sun achieved its maximum heat, its fire power (Judges, Chapter 15, Verse 14). The other set of streamers was incombustible and attacked and harnessed the sun (40).

The streamer symbols are ambivalent. The sun was a beast of burden — an ass that was bracketed by brass fashionings to the pole of the celestial milling wheel — and yet the jawbone of the ass hurled destructive teeth rays that killed one thousand Philistines (Judges, Chapter 15, Verses 15-17). (see illustration) The sun is an ass, a saddened beast of

burden. The sun is omnipotent — its teeth can destroy by hurling death-dealing flames (41).

This is a story about the destructiveness of the sun: The sun, on his way to his castle in the middle of the earth, is hungry as he enters the Western Gate of Heaven. For his dinner his mother prepares forty loaves of bread. If the food is late, the famished sun devours the mother and all of his relatives. This is why the sun is often blood red on the eastern horizon (42).

Polynesian myths allude to the streamers that attack the sun. These streamers were ropes (43), were the legs of Maui (44), the spider web body of the Polynesian man, Kana (45). Maui held that the sun did not remain long enough in the sky to permit Maui's food to be prepared. So Maui trapped the sun with a rope noose. With the jawbone of his progenitor, instead of beating Philistines, he beat the sun. (Refer to Chapter One.) After this beating the crippled sun became an ass, a beast of burden, that could not move, as before, so rapidly across the sky (46). The jawbone of the progenitor, the same as the jawbone of the ass, was the rays of the sun, the progenitor of everything that lived.

In the congeries of skeins, jawbones, streamers, rays, hairs, and other things, sinews were of special and cognate significance. This cognate departure, a dichotomy perhaps peculiar to myths having to do with the crippled hero, gave existence to such greats as those named by Levin (47), Raglan (48) and Rank (49). This esteemed group included Oedipus, Theseus, Romulus, Heracles, Perseus, Jason, Bellerophon, Pelops, Sigurd or Siegfried, Asclepius, Dionysos, Apollo, Jesus, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Watu Gunung, Nykikang Llew Llawgyffes, Arthur, Robin Hood, Melkart, Gilgamesh, and Samson.

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Jacob wrestled all night with the angel of the lord. He strained a sinew of his thigh vein (Genesis, Chapter 32, Verse 32). The wrestling occurred at Pineal. The angel advised Jacob to desist wrestling because the sun was coming up. The angel changed Jacob's name to Israel: "He who pre-

vails against the Lord." Jacob became a crippled hero, the sinew of his thigh vein was injured.

This concept, the sinew of the thigh vein, promised a cache of valuable information. A vein means blood. It is more than possible that the sinew of the thigh vein meant the umbilical cord. Dionysos was born from the thigh of Zeus (50). The sinew of Jacob's thigh vein was injured — injured during the struggle to loosen or to expel the nascent sun from the birth canal of darkness. It was injured during the laborious nocturnal wrestling with the angel. The struggle ceased when the sun was born (Genesis, Chapter 32, Verse 24-32).

Information about other sinews belonging to the category of streamers supports the umbilical cord theory. The ankh was the giver of life. The umbilical cord is the giver of life (51). (See illustrations.) The Ankh was equated with that sinew that provided latches for the sandals for the feet of the kings of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt (52). These kings were buried with their feet toward the sun. The ankh was the umbilical cord (53). George Lechler supports this point of view.

Perhaps a footling breach produced this notion, this notion of the umbilical cord being a tie for a sandal. The Middle Kingdom kings suggest the plight of Oedipus. He was hung by a sinew that pierced his feet.

"As for the child, [Oedipus] it was but three day old,

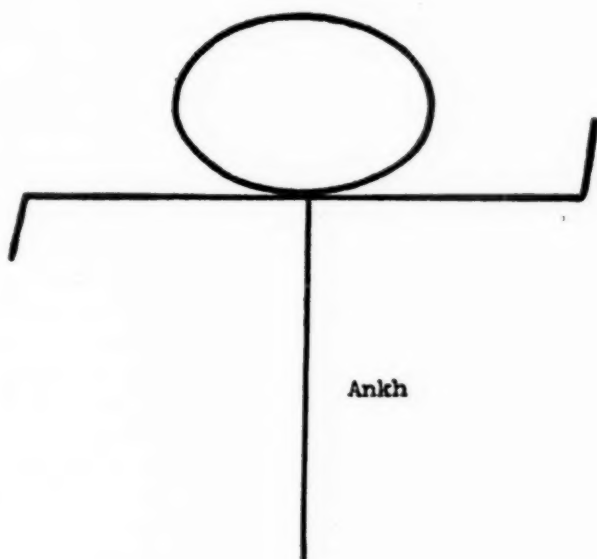
"When Laius, its ankles pierced and pinned

"Together, gave it to be cast away

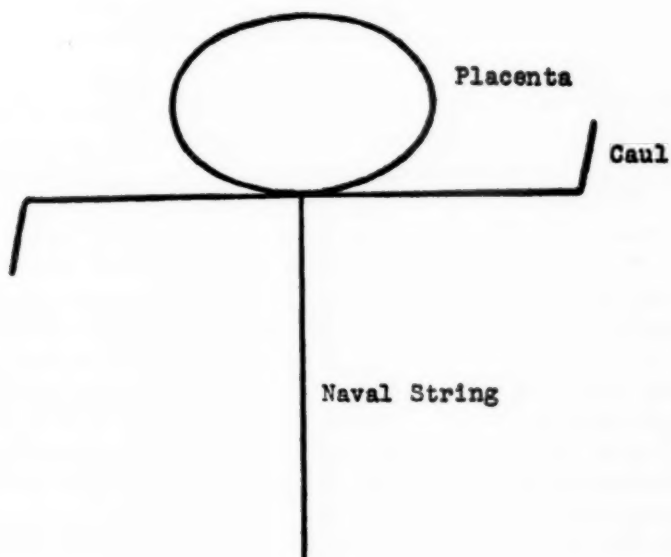
"By others on the trackless mountain side" (54).

Oedipus was abandoned and crippled. This quotation was noted in A. J. Levin's work on the Oedipus myth. Levin's new approach to this myth emphasized the physical crippling of the infant. Levin pioneered a challenge to the Freudian elision and to the Rankian conception of the Oedipus myth.

The noose idea, identified with Shiva and encountered in the death of Jocasta (55), was contacted again in the birth of Esau and Jacob (Genesis, Chapter 25, Verses 25-26). Esau means red and hairy. Jacob, smooth and hairless, was the



Ankh

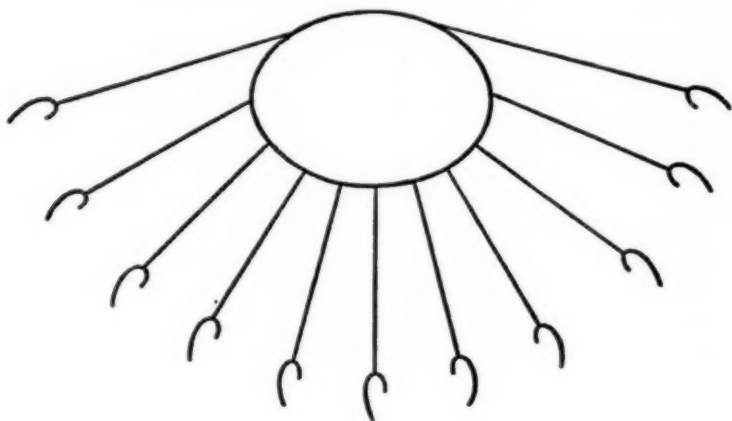


Placenta

Caul

Naval String

second born of the twins. Jacob left the womb of Rebekah holding Esau's heel. This reference to the hand probably does not stem entirely from the Egyptian hieroglyph of the sun. Bernard Bothmer called attention to the fact that this hieroglyph supports a hand on the end of each streamer. (See illustrations.) These hands were open, giving hands,



The Egyptian Hieroglyph meaning the Sun in vogue 1,600 years before Christ.

rather than grasping hands. According to Dr. George Lechler, Wayne State University, this hieroglyph endured for a short time some sixteen hundred years before Christ.

Esau, the child, was tied by the umbilical cord to the placenta. The word Rebekah means noose. Esau, the sun, was followed by Jacob, the moon. Jacob means the supplanter and he supplanted his brother, Esau, through a trick cleverly devised by Rebekah. To simulate the hairy Esau, Jacob donned a hairy mantle, a caul, to fool the senile and blind Isaac. As a matter of fact both Esau and Jacob became rejected and lame heroes.

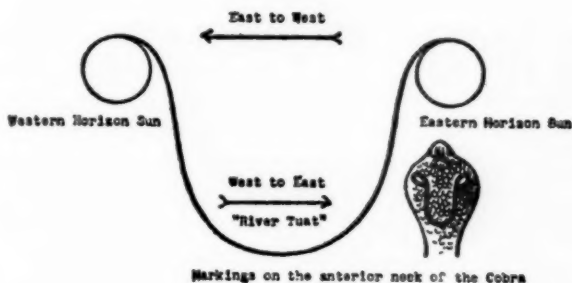
Maui, in the company of his brothers, noosed his legs about the matinal sun (56). The sun was trapped in its passage through the Eastern Gate of Heaven, the birth canal (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62). The crippling of the sun was

attended by the quivering of the sun's legs (63). The sun, the greatest hero of all time, was crippled and abandoned.

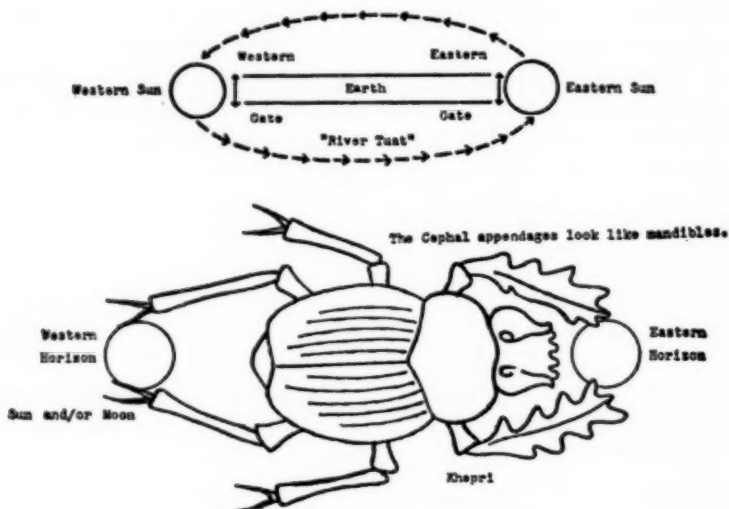
The baby is born. The baby is attached to a sinew that carries blood, the umbilical cord. On the other end of the umbilical cord is the placenta. The baby, when born, is cyanotic or red or bluish red and is rough covered with vernix caseosa. At the other end of the umbilical cord is the pale placenta that is nearly bloodless, at least nearly bloodless when delivered.

On the anterior neck of the cobra is a design composed of two circles connected with a loop. The linkage between the two circles is an arc curved downwards. One circle is the sun at the Western Gate of Heaven, the other circle is the sun at the Eastern Gate of Heaven (64). The connecting down-bent line is the direction of the sun at night. The sun at night travels from west to east. The course is designated by the line with the apex down. This not only indicates the western horizon sun and the eastern horizon sun, but also represents the sun and the moon: the baby and the umbilical cord and the placenta.

The cobra symbol (see illustration) for the simultaneous



appearance of the morning and the evening sun is paralleled by Khepri. Khepri is a beetle. Khepri pushes a ball of dung forward and Khepri drags a ball of dung behind. The simultaneous symbol for the morning and evening sun is accomplished by this beetle. This symbol also means the



sun and the moon, or the child, the umbilical cord and the placenta.

Unbeknownst to the Egyptians, the female beetle placed a fertilized egg in the forward pear-shaped ball of dung. As the sun is born out of itself in the morning, the old sun gives birth to a new sun that is actually the new beetle hatched from the egg. This beetle is Khepri after Kheprer, meaning ultimately the *only begotten* - the only begotten sun (65)! This parthenogenesis is weighty with meaning.

The umbilical cord and the navel are the carrier of life. "Thus the World Navel is the symbol of the continuous creation: the mystery of the maintenance of the world through that continuous miracle of vivification which wells within all things" (66).

Esau means red and hairy. Jacob was smooth and hairless. When Jacob was born, he grasped the heel of Esau. The primitives' concept of birth was animistically projected upon one aspect of the sun. When the baby was born, the baby was tied to the after-birth. An animism was responsible for the following similarities: baby=Esau=sun, on the one hand, and placenta=Jacob=moon, on the other hand.

Animistic concepts of twinship account for those occasions when the sun and the moon appeared together in the morning sky. Pharez and Zareth repeated this same unfolding (Genesis, Chapter 38, Verses, 28-30). The Ra even if reversed means Ra, the Egyptian sun god (66A). The hand was featured, a significant tie was featured. A midwife tied a red string on the hand of the first born. This hand was withdrawn into the mother and the second twin replaced the first twin. The first twin was pulled back, was impeded in his birth, was held back possibly by the "sinew of the thigh vein" — the umbilical cord. Zareth suggests the sun. Zareth whose hand was tied with a red string means East, brightness; Pharez means ruptured, division.

Esau exhausted by the hunt, at the end of the day traded his patrimony, his inheritance, for a mess of red pottage. This red pottage, possibly made with emmer, resuscitated Esau. Esau was revived by the blood from the placenta. He had been transfused. One twin was vitalized by the essence of life (67), by the giver of life contained in the umbilical cord (the ankh) and in the placenta. Of the twinship, one twin, like Christ, gives up the ghost, "dies" so that the other twin may live. This sequence, this theme of life out of death, is interwoven into the history of mankind. Jesus Christ died to save the world, or the sun dies to give life to his twin, the matinal sun, or to the moon. This is the story of the revival of Aison by Medea (68).

Because of night and day, life and death sequences, antithesis is regularly encountered in myths; the dying sun provided blood that surcharges the anemic moon with life. Other myths hold that the worn-out sun, perhaps symbolized by the senile blind patriarchs of the Bible, was nocturnally and maternally transfused with the fire of life (69). Antithesis interferes with logical continuity. The sun is crippled by senility. A chi index would reveal a startling number of Biblical patriarchs who were senile and blind.† At evening twilight the eye of the sun goes out (70). The red splash on the twilight sky is the blood from the sun that has committed suicide (71).

A Polynesian myth deals with twinship. The mighty Polynesian hero cuts Papa (earth) into two parts (72). In the animistic projections occurring in legends, the crippling usually involves the lower extremities. To this group belong the heroes Gilgamesh (73), Jacob, Oedipus and Balaam. Other myths tell the story of crippling of other parts of the body. Sometimes the crippling was caused by an overall weakness. This group includes Abraham (74), Ishmael (Genesis, Chapter 21, Verse 15), Samson and others. In some myths the crippling involved the upper body. Jereboam's arm shrank (I Kings, Chapter 13, Verse 4). Maui (75) and Horus (76) possessed lopsided heads. In other stories the hero, like Samson, is crippled by being shackled.

Some myths emphasized the crippling. Other myths emphasized abandonment. Abraham was abandoned by his mother (77). Abraham abandoned his son, Ishmael; Christ was abandoned by the Jews (Mark, Chapter 15, Verses 66-72). Moses was abandoned by his mother (Exodus, Chapter 2, Verse 3).

Many myths describe powerful adversaries who attempted to kill the newborn hero. Nimrod, the great hunter, attempted to murder Abraham (78). Herod attempted to kill Christ (Matthew, Chapter 8, Verse 16). The life of the infant Zarathustra was endangered by enemies (79). The Pharaoh sought the life of Moses (Exodus, Chapter 1, Verse 22).

In animistic parlance, the sun was not only a beast of burden but also a target for projected hostility. The solar animism, evolved from emotions disturbed by the rejection of the children, has been eruditely described by A. J. Levin (80). Rites have been derived from the Polynesian need for ritualistically harnessing the sun. These rites reduce the sun to being a beaten beast of burden.

The work of A. J. Levin has pointed to the heroic mythology as evidence of the parts played by physiological

† A chi index is a statistical entity that measures or indicates a probable relationship between two things or two combinations of things.

deprivations and weaknesses on the one hand, and actual physical impairment of functions by crippling, lameness, blindness and the like on the other, in the genesis and emergence of institutions, symbolism and culture in general. This process has gone on interminably and has deposited what he has chosen to call "the cultural residues of rejection-vast, unexplored deposits of institutions which began as individual distortions" (81). In the case of Oedipus (82), it was deprivation by exposure plus actual crippling of the pedal extremities — a circumstance entirely by-passed by Dr. Freud — which began the mythological series of events; in the case of Samson it was less obvious but effective physiological deprive by cultural and ritualistic demands and conformities. Because such deprivations are so deeply rooted in culture, man learns to value them. "A practical purpose of the hero myths was to make life more tolerable in an atmosphere of rejection." This is also at the root of the solar symbolism and animal symbolism which attempt to extract the things of value in the physical and animal world and to apply them to human, social regulation. Solar symbolism and animal power and cunning as the utmost of value and power, according to Levin, are integral parts of social rejection patterns throughout the world because these are required to make rejection and functional impairment acceptable. The solar dualism (day and night) lend themselves to human regulation. The light is good while the dark is bad.

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The birth of the sun out of the introitus of the earth, the Eastern Gate of Heaven, was a virginal birth that was attended by a virgin (83).

"The cycle of seasons on the earth† was seen to be paralleled by a coordinate cycle in the heavens. There, too,

† "Originally, it was the earth itself that was the goddess, virginal again with every spring. Her son was the fruit of the earth, born only to die, and in dying, to be implanted once more in the earth, as the seed that would renew the cycle."

was to be seen the virgin goddess: the constellation, Virgo that rose in the eastern sky just when Sirius, the star from the east, was signaling the new birth of the sun. The passage of the horizon line through Virgo was the conception of the virgin from the sun. The earth myth was thus blended with the sky myth and both with the memory of ancient heroes, real or legendary, and so came the saga of the Redeemer" (84).

Statues of Isis were black because Isis was the black fertile mud of the Nile river basin after the flood had passed. The statues of Isis were black because Isis was the fertile mother earth at night (85) (86). The black Demeter — Demeter Melaina, the mother of Persephone, who slept with Pluto in the Nether World — represents the mother, the earth at night (87). Kerenyi and Jung speak of the black earth as fertility (88). The black madonna was the earth at night (89).

Immediately after the sun was born, the ancients noted that the darkness of night disappeared. They thought that the black madonna had rejected her newborn son (sun). The primitives did not know that the sun's brilliance had erased the darkness. They did not know that the effulgence of the sun had erased his mediocre companions. In other instances the sun's birth was crippled by the ankh (90), the noose, the umbilical cord. This animistic version of the sun perhaps represents an analogous situation that obtains when the umbilical cord externalizes during a footling breach.

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Usually deprivation comes to mean oral deprivation. Oral deprivation is quite regularly accompanied by rage. Rage belongs to the teeth and cannibalism. The cannibal attacks the frustrating object. The cannibalized object devours its host from within (90A). This devouring and being devoured by the cannibalized host sets the stage for animistic antithesis. The animism featuring the solar jawbone of the ass expresses an angry deglutition.

This alimentary cosmogony, animistically vitalized, is expressed in myths as a devouring of (91) (92) (93) (94) or

a defecation of the sun (95)(96)(97)(98)(99)(100)(101). Orality involves manifestations cognate with ideas and concepts that are peculiar to eating. This aspect of the rejected hero needs further elucidation. Many myths denoting the concept of the Western Gate of Heaven or the Eastern Gate of Heaven represent the mouth (102)(103)(104)(105)(106)(107)(108). In an Ainu myth, the Eastern Gate of Heaven — the throat of the devil — swallowed the crows of night (109). The crows were the last remnants of darkness. The Symplegades were two rows of opposing rocky teeth. The teeth attempted to crush Jason and his boatful of sailors. The Symplegades tore a few gleams of light from the tail of the dove (110). The dove was the return of light in the morning.

Allusions to robes, webs, and nooses at first sight seem unrelated to teeth. A myth here and there that is comprehensible however, exposes the more obscure, complicated, gastronomic meanings concealed in other myths. The dragon's tooth is boomerang-shaped. This shape is encountered in many other configurations where the subject of teeth is scarcely suspected. Scimitars symbolize the sun (111). (See illustration.) This shape is derived from the sliver of moon or sun visible during a partial eclipse. Other symbols for the sun are of similar shape (112). In one myth, a Polynesian pulled a canoe down from a high cliff. The canoe evidenced the boomerang shape. The Polynesian canoe-man bested in a fight turned to stone, as did his victor and the canoe (113). (See Lot's wife story Chapter I.)

The Samson story provides linkage with the Polynesian myths that refer to the jawbone. This repetition is established in another connection. Samson killed Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. This slaughter took place at Remathlehi. Because the ass is the sun, the Biblical jawbone of an ass is analagous to the jawbone of the progenitor. The jawbone of the ass means the jawbone of the progenitor because the ass and the sun are interchangeable. The jawbone of the ass, the jawbone of the progenitor, means the jawbone of the sun. This sun connection heightens the interest in jawbone

stories wherever encountered. However, the most illuminating message communicated by Remathlehi is that Samson was not a proselyte of the Hebrew god, but that he was the sun or a version of the sun employing sun implements, the fiery teeth (114). The teeth, when ass's, teeth are the destructive biting rays of the sun (115).

Included in the jawbone theme of solar movements are certain attenuations that escape ordinary inspection. Spider webs, ropes, pillars, gates, rocks (116) and cairns not only represent traps, streamers emanating from the sun or externally applied to the sun, but imply teeth as well. The jawbone of the shark stretches from the lower ocean to the sky (117). Even the ankh is a trap that implied teeth. Angi, the Hindu fire god, ate and consumed the forest (118). Fire and oral apparati are often linked together.

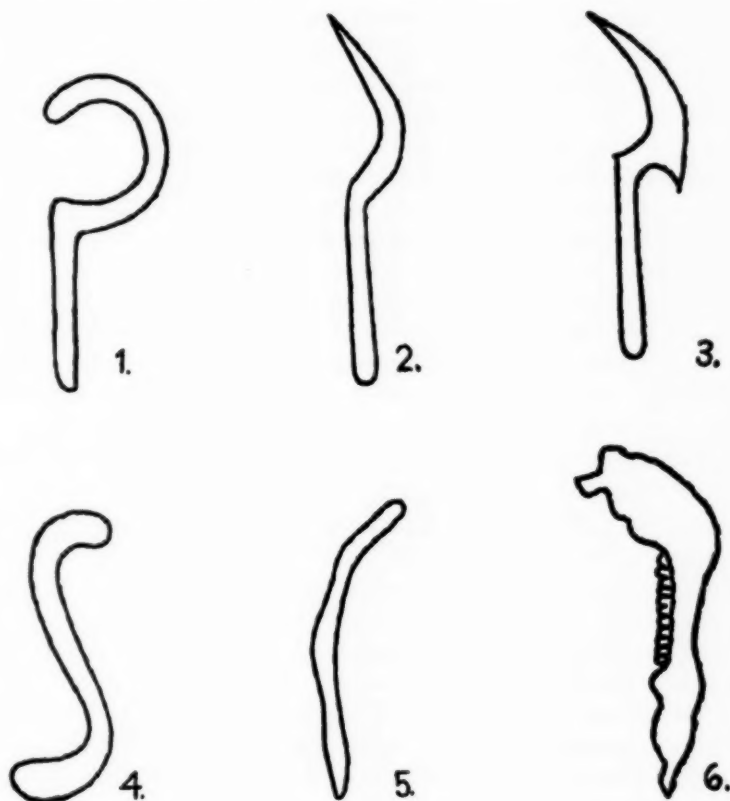
"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven *tongues* like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (119). That this predicament is analogous to the denouement at the Tower of Babel seems to have been missed by most religious scholars.

The Shark that had eaten Kaulu's brother said, "If I open my mouth, my upper jaws can reach the heavens, while my lower jaw is scraping the bottom of the sea" (120).

The lower jaw, hinged and movable, is more frequently featured in mythology than is the upper jaw. At times the upper jaw stands out merely because the lower jaw is gone. The African Ugandi, upon the death of the king, placed his lower jaw on exhibition (121). There is no point at this time to separate upper jaw symbols from lower jaw symbols.

Although this may seem vague, it might be said that legends featuring a unique mutilation of a body, as illustrated by the tearing off of the lower jaw, usually accredit the lower part of the mutilation with rather mystifying quali-

ties and vicissitudes. In these myths of mutilation, the lower part is either cut off or torn from the upper part of the body. The earth is torn away from the sun, the moon.



Weapons of Sun - Gods

1 and 2 of Marduk, 3 of Amon Rā, 4 of Gilgamesh,
5 of Shamash, 6 the jaw-bone of an ass.

The jawbone of the progenitor in one Polynesian story was the jawbone of the ancestors. In another tale, Aganoshi — Jizo, an avatar of an earlier god, had no lower jaw. His predecessor lost his lower jaw because of a toothache. He tore off the painful jaw and threw it away (122). The Hindu God, Indra, slew enemies with a headbone of a horse (123). More than likely this Rig Veda referred to the lower jaw rather than to the upper jaw. In some areas of the world the jawbones of kings were preserved for exhibition. It is not the intent of this study to purge all the cultural records of all the references to lower portion mutilates. The items are numerous enough to illustrate the sequence of the vicissitudes.

The lower half of the ancestress was dead. This dead, anemic, putrefying corpus served a rather unique function. It was used by Maui as a fishhook that, attended by Rupe (124), the dove, fished out of the ocean the land at the bottom of the sea. Maui killed his son and made his jaw into a fish-hook. His ear was used as bait.

Maui roped the sun and beat it with the jawbone of the progenitor. Maui killed his oldest son and made a magic fish-hook from his jawbone. The ear was used as bait. Maui went to his sick ancestress. One half of her body was already dead. Maui wrenched off her lower jaw and made a fish-hook out of it. He concealed the fish-hook on his person.

Hine-nui-te-po had teeth like a barracuda (125). Since Hine is the darkness and at other times is called the moon, the teeth are the stars. Shiva had sharp teeth (126). Aganoshi-Jizo in a previous avatar suffered a toothache in a tooth of his lower jaw. He took off his lower jaw and threw it away. Aganoshi-Jizo means, "he who has no jaw" (127). Ganesha, the elephant god, had but one tusk. Ganesha lost a tusk when it was struck by an axe hurled by Rama (128). The axe particularly when tinted with amber signified the sun. This concept was prevalent in early Norse Mythology. Agni, the personification of fire, the fire god and the sun god, was bracketed not only with jaws but with bright teeth

as well (129). The Egyptian hieroglyphs frequently depicted a god wielding a saw that could cut through the tree of life. This saw was notable because of the teeth. No doubt this Egyptian saw was a primer in the jawbone series (130).

In the Cook Islands, the sun and the moon were the eyes of Vatea (light or bright sky). Vatea and Tongaiti (Tangaroa) (a demiurge, a silence and a sea god) quarreled over the parentage of Papa (Earth). Each claimed to be the father. To settle this argument, Papa was cut into two parts. One half was given to Vatea and the other half was given to Tongaiti. Vatea threw his portion, the upper portion, into the sky. It became the sun. Tongaiti allowed his portion, the lower portion, to remain on the ground. Then he imitated Vatea. He threw his portion into the sky where it became the moon. But the blood had drained out of it. It had partly decomposed. For that reason the moon gives a paler light.

The similarities in myths that deal with the lower jaw and myths that deal with some twins, and/or twin portions of the body, are quite obvious. These sequences vitalize a familiar theme stemming from animistic projections. Life is generated out of death. The baby was born out of death. In his framework, however, the dead was not without powerful significance. The observing ancients looked upon the birth and the after-birth as a reciprocal duality. The after-birth was the giver of life. It was connected with the ankh, the umbilical cord, the giver of life. In Egyptology the ankh was referred to as the giver of life and was the umbilical cord (130A).

It appears that the ancients believed that sometimes the cord held back the birth. The animistic counterpart of the physiological is encountered in those fables that noose the sun and impede its progress. As the sun was born, Maui, the Polynesian, noosed his legs about the sun. The legs of the sun quivered as if injured. At least the progress of the sun was impeded. Hine-nui-te-po (night) noosed her legs about Maui. She killed Maui as he attempted to crawl into her vagina. To gain a god's immortality it was the intent of

the mortal Maui to exchange his viscera for the viscera of Hine-nui-te-po (131), just as Maui had attempted the sub-aquatic exchange of his viscera for the viscera of Tiki (132). In both instances his siblings (once disguised as birds) caused his failure.

Based on ancillary support, there is good reason to consider the water in this encounter to be the amnios. No wonder Maui was considered a miscarriage (133). The placental exchange was not completed. The placenta did not provide him with the blood-fire of perpetual life. There was something missing that led to his death. He did not possess the vitalizing secret name of his immortal god (134). He did not possess nor obtain the essence of eternal life. His tetragrammaton was askew. It was askew because of a mistake made by his father.

The noose, a variant of the jawbone, is a tie that designates a trap. The noose, the Supreme Ensnaer, Set, fragmented the sun god, Osiris (135) into fourteen pieces. This might refer to multiple placenta, or to fragmentation of the placenta or to the devouring of the placenta by the Western Gate of Heaven. The Western Gate of Heaven chewed the placenta into small pieces. A delay in the birth of the placenta retarded the movement of the infant, crippled the infant, just as Maui lassoed the sun and crippled the sun's progress.

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It would be difficult to prove that Noah's raven of darkness and Noah's dove of light were animistic projections of the birth-after-birth complex. This assumption is not justified, even though a flood preceded the "birth" of the animals from the ark. Even though the ancient Jews (136) and the present day Aymara (137) made powerful charms from the ashes of the placenta, there is still no convincing proof that the Phoenix Bird and ashes are a birth-after-birth complex. Still the evidence is rather suggestive.

The white cock, the return of light, was delivered out of a hole in the sky. As Kana assisted with the birth of the sun, the cock crowed (138). Kana demanded from Ka-hoa-

lu the water of life. With the water of life (amnios) he revived his brother, Niheu, who was wrapped in leaves under a Loulu palm. Perhaps this alludes to the placenta birth-tree (139). The white cock, associated with the Kia Wea — Kia Wea birds that cry when darkness is going — are analogous to the dove and the tail feathers of the dove that were bitten off by the jaws of the Symplegades. Both instances took place with the birth of the matinal sun. Cock — Kia Wea Kia Wea equals dove — dove's tail feathers. Even the Polynesian tendency to repeat syllables is probably determined.

x x x x x x x

From antiquity the placenta, umbilical cord, and caul have been objects of awe. In many cultures, because of sympathetic magic, the after-birth is carefully preserved, and care attends its disposition. In some areas the placenta was planted under a tree. This tree was called a birth tree (140). Hupe Indians of California split a tree and placed the placenta in the split. Then the tree was bound together and encouraged to grow (141). This was a real tree of life. The destiny of the coexistent twin depends upon the fate of the placenta tree.

There is evidence that supports the belief that the sinew connected with the feet of Oedipus represented the umbilical cord. A sinew latched the sandals of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom kings. This sinew was also the ankh. The ankh was the umbilical cord. Oedipus hung on a tree (perhaps a birth-tree) by a sinew piercing his heels. The swollen foot, sinew and tree could well be a placenta — umbilical cord-birth tree complex.

This sinew was the ankh, the giver of life. And the ankh is recognizable as the umbilical cord. Oedipus was discarded to the side of a mountain, to a tree. The after-birth is taken from the side of the "mons Veneris," from the bush—the pubic hair. A Cree Indian spied on the playmate of his son. His son's name was "Beadspitter." He played with a companion who was of the same age. This companion was called "Thrown Away." The father discovered that

"Thrown Away" came from the bush where the father had discarded "Beadspitter's" placenta (142).

The placenta must never be carelessly discarded lest it be devoured by some animal. If devoured by an animal the existing "twin" will take on the physical characteristics of the animal that devoured the placenta (143).

The ancients in their attempt to discover the secret of life identified the baby and the after-birth with the sun and the moon. They advocated cognate assumptions about the baby tied to the placenta. The birth-after-birth became animistically projected upon the sun and the moon. The moon placed the role of the placenta.

The moon in sympathetic magic was permitted once a month to shine on the placenta of the Baganda king. Then the placenta was inspected by the king. The king assured himself that his twin was in good health. Then the placenta was returned to its wrappers and placed again in the temple under the supervision of the Kimbugwe. Attention is called again to the Baganda. The central African Baganda treat the after-birth as an actual twin or double. Encased in a pot, it is buried beneath the plantain tree. The after-birth becomes a ghost that goes into the foliage of the tree. This tree is carefully guarded. A non-relative must be prevented from making food or drink from its fruit. Should a non-kin make food or drink from the plantain's fruit the ghost-twin goes away and the child in the house follows the ghost and dies. The ghost, the placenta, the connection with the tree, is of great significance (144).

In many cultures, the caul is a mantle that provides foresight. The Kwakiutl Indians feed the after-birth to ravens to insure foresight in the living twin (145).

In Java, the women place the placenta in a vessel (146). This vessel is bedecked with flowers, fruit and candles. The candles are lit and by night the vessel is floated down stream to the crocodiles. Either placentas were crocodiles, the brother and sister human counterparts, or the crocodiles were inhabited by the ancestor, and at least one twin was religiously returned to the ancestor. This connection with a

jaw full of teeth could not be ignored. Comparable stories are encountered in other parts of the world. In some parts of Africa, the crocodile is the home of a dead ancestor (147). If you kill a crocodile, you will become a crocodile (148). The Egyptians had a crocodile sun god (149).

Polynesian tales describe a jawbone of a scion, of an ancestor, of a progenitor. The *Rig-veda*, quoted by Smythe, describes a weapon made from the headbone of a horse (150). The jawbone of the ass was used by Samson. He found a jawbone of a rotten ass "and slew one thousand men there with" (151). The jawbone, teeth, fire, sun [ancestor], placenta, and decay are either symbolically interchangeable or are symbolic *adnexae*.

Life out of death. The ancients believed that death caused life. They strived to solve this mystery. They left no stone unturned. Out of a welter of presuppositions, they evolved the idea of the transmission of vital substance from one thing to another thing. I say "thing" because often the "thing" was alive only by virtue of the magic of animism. For instance, they noted the interruption in the sun's light and warmth. The twilight darkness crippled the sun. The sun is dead. In the morning the sun is born out of the death of night. Night and earth combined their efforts to revitalize the sun. This inaccuracy was conceived of as an exchange.

At first it was difficult to envision the sequences that existed in the ancient mind that equated teeth with the placenta. However, when it is discovered how they reached their conclusions, the conclusions are justified under the circumstances. They predicated an external soul that could be passed from one person to another person. They even allowed for an interruption in time before the soul, after having left the first body, was transmitted to the second body. The natives of Pennefather River, Queensland, believed that part of the child's spirit stays in the after-birth. This after-birth is treated with great respect. It was buried in the sand. The spot was marked with sticks. The Angeo, (the being that caused conception by placing mud patties into the vagi-

nas of women) recovers the after-birth and stores it in a cave or in pools until it is placed in the newborn baby (152).

The Baganda illustrate this concept. The placenta is a double and is considered another child. The part of the umbilical cord still attached to the baby is the ghost of the neonate. When this drops off it is carefully treated. It is rubbed with butter, swathed in bark cloth and kept through life under the name of a twin (153). The navel string and the placenta are the seat of the external soul (154). On ancient Iceland, the chorion was considered the spirit of the dead (155).

The after-birth was considered to be alive. It not only contained the spirit, the ghost, the vital essence, but it was a sibling as well. The sibling relationship was often represented by a growing bush or tree. The Baganda (156), Maoris (157), Fijians (158), the natives of New Guinea, and the Celebes (159) planted trees on the spot where the after-birth was buried. These trees were the living counterparts of the newborn child. The Battas of Sumatra (160), the natives of Bali (161) and Sumatra, the inhabitants of Timor (162) considered the after-birth as a sibling of the new baby. The natives of Saparoea, Haroekoe and Noessa Laut Islands near Amboyna believed the caul gave second sight (163). In Luang-Sermala, the natives believed the caul provided a special sight. Those born with a caul could recognize the dead ancestors (164). The Warramungo provide a unique twist. In exchange for the navel proposed to be used as an amulet, the maternal uncle gives to the father of the child a gift of weapons (165).

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The deciduous teeth, like the placenta, were detached from the body. The tooth sequence, like the placenta sequence, was freighted with magic. A deciduous tooth is lost. The weak tooth is gone. Magic is employed to gain a stronger tooth. This employs the exchange idea. Among the Cherokee, the child who has lost (166) a tooth walks around a beaver house four times saying an incantation to the effect that the beavers should supply him with a new and stronger

tooth. Bohemians (167), Singhalese (168), the Victorian Aborigines (169), Macedonians (170), Arabians (171), exchange old deciduous teeth for better and stronger new teeth.

Sometimes the old tooth is thrown at the sun. This is important because this is a sun connection, not only with the teeth, but, as it shall be shown, with the placenta as well. The old teeth are hurled at the sun because (172) the sun begot hail stones in the form of teeth. An exchange is requested. Lebanese children throw deciduous teeth toward the sun asking the sun to take (173) the ass' teeth and trade it with deer's teeth. The Armenians require that the deciduous dog tooth be exchanged for an old tooth (174).

Finally the teeth and the placenta come together in death. The jawbone and the placenta of the deceased Bagan-da king are placed together in a temple on exhibition (175).

The teeth, the fire, the ancestor, the twin (placenta) are brought together in one myth. The after-birth is a brother, a twin or a double. In Sumatra, the baby is called the big brother and the placenta is called the little brother (176). This older brother-younger brother theme frequents the Old Testament. The designation "older brother" and "younger brother" is encountered in stories about biblical twins and even about biblical brothers. The surname of the apostle Thomas is Didymus, which means twin.

Esau was first born. Jacob held Esau's heel and was second born (Genesis, Chapter 25, Verse 26). Esau's progress was impeded by Jacob. Esau was the oldest and entitled to the patrimony. Jacob tricked him out of it. There was a change of hands. The patriarchal, traditional continuity was shifted from one twin to the other twin. The family's blood was to be carried throughout the succeeding generations by another line.

The reference to the left hand and to the right hand and to the changing of hands was probably invoked by animistic allusions to the tree of life. The fingers of the hand are the branches on the tree. The body and the tree have limbs. In a Polynesian myth, Kaulu was equipped with powerful hands. The right hand was Kakau-Kahi. The left hand was

Lima-pai-hala (177). These names, Lima-pai-hala and Ka-kau-Kau (178), in some remote way refer to trees, perhaps to the tree of life.

x x x x x x x

The great eye of the sun dies at night. The sun goes out. It hops into Hades past the Western Gate of Heaven. The splash of evening red is the blood from the sun after it has committed suicide (179). Other versions picture the sun as being the bloodless pale moon. The pale moon is rejuvenated at night to become the matinal sun. The moon is transfused with the eternal fire of life. An exchange takes place. The vital flame, the spirit, the soul, the immortal substance passes from the earth into the sun causing the rejuvenation of the sun. Jason sailing at night from West to East, just as the sun travels at night from West to East, regained the vital essence of the sun, the Golden Fleece, after passing the Eastern Gates of Heaven (180). An exchange had taken place. The deflated moon surcharged with fire becomes the matinal sun. Maui attempted to exchange his mortal entrails for the immortal, revitalizing entrails of Hine-nui-te-po, the darkness of night. Maui attempted the aquatic interchange of entrails with the immortal Tiki. Mortal Maui attempted to become immortal by this submarine exchange of innards. The innards of Tiki contained the secret essence of eternal life. No wonder Maui sought to exchange viscera with Tiki, the immortal.

Twins are featured in mythology. Even when twinship is not high-lighted, brothers often opposed each other or supported each other in significant ways. One of the brothers is usually inert, while the other brother is active, a builder, a creator, a multiplier, fecund with the fire of life. Ephraim was the fruitful brother, Manasseh was "he who was forgotten." Jacob rejuvenated Esau, the red and hairy sun. Jacob, the supplanter, became Israel, the father of the Israelites. Abraham became the father of the multitudes. The right hand-left hand exchange was in his case acted out with his nephew, Lot. Lot would take the land on the right hand. Abraham would take the land on the left hand (Gene-

sis, Chapter 13, Verse 9). After Lot lost his substance, it was regained and returned to him by Abraham (Genesis, Chapter 14, Verse 16). Romulus was active. He built Rome. Remus was inert (181). Not only twins, doubles or opposites were featured in the Bible, but exchanges too were important.

Manasseh was forgotten while his father placed his right hand on the shoulder of Ephraim (Genesis, Chapter 48, Verses 17-20). Instead of the first-born becoming the vehicle for the transmission of family tradition, the inert brother was passed up for the fruitful Ephraim. Joseph became the increaser (Glossary of the St. James Bible). The caul, the coat of many colors, passed from his shoulders. A mantle passed from Elijah, a rugged, rough man to Elisha, a soft, gentle man (I Kings, Chapter 19, Verse 19). In biblical times Elijah, like the sun, mysteriously appeared and disappeared. A mantle deceived the failing eyes of Isaac. An exchange was made. The mantle of family tradition and patriarchal authority passed from Esau to Jacob. The Mosaic code determines the oldest son as being the successor to the father. In the Old Testament this code was often ignored. David named Solomon to succeed him. The older son, Adonijah, was by-passed (I Kings, Chapter 2, Verses 1-15).

This exchange is analogous to the fire of life passing from the moon to the morning sun — the fire of the placenta, the blood of the placenta, passing from the placenta to its twin or brother. The real child is called the older brother; the placenta is called the younger brother (182). The placenta carries the soul, the spirit of life, the vital essence of eternal existence. This concept utilizes such names as Joseph, the increaser; Ephraim, the fruitful; Abraham, the father of the multitude. The placenta, through the ank, the umbilical cord, enervates its twin at its own expense. The placenta becomes a crippled hero.

Adam and Eve were not exactly twins but Adam's name is so often linked with Eve, that Adam and Eve almost come to be one person. Eve was an issue of Adam, coming to life out of his side or from his rib-bone (Genesis, Chapter 2, Verse 21). This is reminiscent of Dionysos, born from the

thigh of Zeus. The rib-bone is of the same boomerang shape as the Polynesian canoe, the shark jawbone, the jawbone of the ass, the fish-hooks made from jawbones that pulled up Papa (Earth) from beneath the waters (ammios), accompanied by Rupe, the pigeon, the placenta. The rib-bone is one side of the Gate of Heaven. From the birth canal of the mother earth, Eve is born. The mother earth is a male-female complex, a hermaphrodite. The name Adam means earthy man or red. This red is the vital substance elaborated by the earth that restores life (Exodus, Chapter 12, Verses 18-19), (18)(184)(185)(186)(187). The name Eve means living — enliven.

In the Cain and Abel couplet, Cain lives and Abel dies. Abel is inert. Cain means possessed. Abel means vapor. The mouth of the mother drank Abel's blood. The red vital substance was taken up by the mother. "And now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy *hand*" (Genesis, Chapter 4, Verse 11).

The hand refers to an exchange that had been made. The vital blood was passed from Abel, the placenta, to mother earth. The hand symbol encountered is significant. It represents the continuity of generation through the passing of the vital substance from progenitor to the scion, from the earth to the moon to the sun.

Similar material is encountered in other myths. In this connection the suicide of the sun is significant. The red coloring of the evening twilight is derived from the blood of the sun that had committed suicide (188). As the night darkens the twilight's horizon, the blood of the sun gradually disappears. It is swallowed by the mother of night, the Western Gate of Heaven. It is possible that the suicide of the sun might be linked with the death of Goliath. David felled Goliath. He chopped the giant's head off — using the sword of the giant (I Samuel, Chapter 17, Verse 51). In substance it was the giant's weapon that killed him. There is a parallel to this story that is quite important. The Babylonian god, Bel, cut off his own head. His blood mixed with

clay and earth and was fashioned into man (189). The blood of Abel, the son of Adam, was drunk by the mouth of the mother, the mouth of the earth. The Jewish word for ground is *adamah*, the feminine gender of the male Adam. The fable of Cain and Abel presents a cross section of another version of the story of creation.

Abel, the favorite of God, the Father, dies. He loses his blood just as the placenta loses its blood. Seth (which means put or who put) another son of Adam, was perhaps Cain after all. Seth, the progenitor, seems indistinguishable from Cain. A comparison of the names of Cain's progeny with the names of Seth's progeny provides suggestive evidence of their identicalness.

| <i>Cain's line</i> | <i>Seth's line</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Enoch (dedicated or disciplines) | Enos (mortal man, sick, disappeared) |
| Irad (wild ass, head of decents) | Cainan (possessor or purchaser) |
| Mahujael (who proclaims God) | Enoch (dedicated or disciplines) |
| Methusael (who demands his death) | Mahalaleel (he that praises God) |
| Lamech (poor, made low) | Methuselah (he has sent his death) |
| | Lamech (poor, made low) |
| | (Gen. Ch. 5, V. 7-28) |

Similarity in the names of the line of Cain and names of the line of Seth suggest that Cain and Seth were identical. Both lines end with Lamech. Contrasted passages from the Bible support the identicalness of the Cain Lamech with the Seth Lamech.

23. (Cain Lamech) And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice ye wives of Lamech, harken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding and a young man to my hurt.
24. (Cain Lamech) If Cain shall be avenged seven fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold.

31. (Seth Lamech) And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy and seven years; and he died.

The two wives of Cain's Lamech again contrast the fruitful with the inert. One wife was called Adah, which means an assembly. The other wife was called Zillah, which means shadow (spirit-soul).

"Twin heroes are among the most important characters in South American Indian mythology. Their adventures form whole cycles in the oral traditions of many tribes from the Guianas to Tierra del Fuego. One of the twins is described as strong and clever, the other as weak and stupid. Their contrasting natures and temper are reflected in adventures and actions which to a large extent determined the physiognomy of our world. In most tribes the twins are personifications of Sun and Moon; thus are explained the weak condition of the younger brother who is the Moon, and like it killed and torn into pieces to be restored by his older brother Sun" (190).

In many fables, sly references are made to the mantle that transferred the blood line, the essence of life, the secret of perpetuity from one person to another person. The exchange was between persons who were nearly always related, as twins, or brothers, or father to son, to daughter, or even to correlated persons, not blood-related. The mantle is taken from the dying or inert sun and is placed on the new sun that will now invade the earth from east to west. The mantle exchanged is from sun to moon or from moon to sun. The mantle is probably the caul that is transferred from the "placenta" to the neonate.

Aaron was stripped of his clothes and the clothes were placed on his son, Eleazar. Then Aaron died and Eleazar went with Moses (God) down the mountain (Numbers, Chapter 20, Verse 28). A fur mantle fooled Jacob and the patriarch's hand transferred his vital substance to the other son. Elijah's mantle fell to Elisha.

x x x x x x x

The sun was abandoned. The sun was abandoned because the black mother, the darkness-earth complex, disap-

peared as the sun was born. The black Isis, Demeter Malaina, the black madonna, represent the fertile mother at night. The newborn sun was rejected by its mother.

The sun was crippled. As a beast of burden the sun was fastened by the ankh, by the umbilical cord, to the spoke of the miller's wheel. The sun was crippled by the darkness of night or crippled in the morning by the umbilical cord, the noose holding back the sun's progress. The crippled hero was the placenta — the moon — the sun's twin that became weakened, bloodless and putrescent in order to give its twin, the sun, new life.

CONCLUSION

The following repetition indicates the nature of ancient man's thinking about the multifaceted aspects of the theme: life out of death. Happenings, sequences, the rigidity of an austere patriarchy, traditional descents, no-traditional descents, patrimony, exchanges, twins as Romulus and Remus (191), Demeter and Hecate (192), doubles, sun, moon, objects animate, objects inanimate, rotten pigs (193), evil spirits (194), physiological functions of the eyes, of the ears, of the gastro-intestinal system, of the genitals; copulations, prostitution, conception, birth, offal, ass manure (195), darkness, heaven, water, hell, beetles (196), coldness, barrenness, teeth, feces, senility, blood, vital substance, Kore (nucleus of life) (197), light, introitus, mouth, the ass, stones, pillars, earth, baby, roughness, mutilated penis, crocodiles eating the placenta (198), smoothness, umbilical cord, placenta, redness, putrefaction, jawbone, fish-hooks, dragon teeth were bound together with a common denominator. At least in the minds of the ancients there was a connecting common denominator. That common denominator was secreted in their quest for life, in their quest for life out of death.

This collection, that does not exhaust the list, contained—at least in the minds of the ancients—essentially two categories of elements: life elements and death elements; living things and dead things. No attempt was made to pair or to bracket any of the death to life sequences. Many of the sym-

bols contain both life and death elements. Often a symbol for life means the symbol of death as well. Or the death symbol is displaced to the life symbol. This meaning is contained in the myth about Samson killing the lion. Samson is the beneficent August sun that replaces Leo, the deadly summer sun, that consumes the vegetation. In other words, at the tail end of summer the beneficent sun cripples the ferocious summer sun. At the tail end of spring the ferocious summer sun cripples the beneficent spring sun (199). Some initiation rites mutilated the penis, causing part death of the organ. The ancients believed that the part death induced a greater life (200). That day followed night was more than a sequence to them—they believed that night caused the existence of day.

The rising sun is being born, is being resurrected, is being abandoned, is being accompanied by its twin: the pale moon, the placenta, the caul, the umbilical cord, the fire of life; the sun is being born out of darkness, out of putrid dark blackness. The death of the sun was coupled with fertility, with life, with the inert placenta unified with the placenta tree of life, the birth tree. The pot-pourri contained, by implication at least, the variety of connections and the myriad of things involved in perpetuating life. The ancients and primitives believed a magic produced life. To make life eternal, they employed as many ingredients as possible and in as many combinations as possible. Any left-out element might be the element essential to the perpetuation of life out of death.

Because of the myriad of elements, and because of the permutations and combinations of arrangements and sequences, the ancients projected upon the sun a projection in depth. They condensed significant life out of death sequences into the various symbols from the sun. In their mind abandonment and crippling were essential to life—life sprung out of death, out of the abandonment by the living things. The hero needed rejection for his resurrection. Further, the sun rejects all others. He must occupy the sky alone (201).

Because the hero needed a death or partial death to

perpetuate his life, he became the crippled hero. The crippling was analogous to initiation death. When the inner soul, the fire, the essence, the Ka, the spirit was released, the Ka, soul, flame, essence of life was reincarnated. The spirit of life lived again in the soul of even a greater avatar of the crippled hero.

Mythical narratives are seductive. The magic in the stories narcotizes critical attention. An enticing chimera materializes; a tantalizing elusiveness is disseminated. The fables produce prodigious people of unique and spectacular properties. People are born. They live fantastic lives, and then they die. But they don't die before spawning a new generation, a new generation as fantastic, as unique as and almost similar to the preceding generation. This inexorable progenitor-to-scion sequence riveted the attention of ancient man. A secret smoldered in the continuity of the ages. This secret was the secret of life everlasting.

The ancients attempted to discover not only the secret, but the meaning of the secret. The ancient philosophers sought eternal life. They worked with a *different* stuff than utilized by contemporary religious philosophers.

The dour philosophers of the past sought after continued life. The dour philosophers of the present seek after continued life. In the past and in the present, life is equivalent to brightness, to high and specific coloration, to internal movement, to warmth, to breathing, to functional and functioning physiology, to green pastures, trees that get green, plants blooming, to juniper (202), to fennel, to the evergreens, to the stars that move, to the rising sun, to the wan moon, to light, to resurrection, to the phoenix bird (203), to the "risen from the dead," to the fountain of youth, to the first unmoved movement, to the Golden Fleece, to the *elan vitale*, the flame, the essence, the blood that does and the blood that does not "taketh away the sins of the world" (from the Mass of the Holy Roman Catholic Church), to the hair of Samson, to the hearth of Ka (204), to the myrrh (205), to the incense, to the fragrance of flowers.

These are the similars in the old and the new. Life em-

braces all of these—and more. The ancients believed this “more” to be a mystic ingredient. Harried alchemists went blind seeking the identity of this mystic ingredient. They attempted to discover the philosopher’s stone—the philosopher’s stone that provides eternal life.

The concept of the philosopher’s stone was inseparable from the concept of a cryptic substance that subsumed life, a secret manna, a Ka, a spirit that charged with vitality every living thing. Despite the form and preservation of the organs, if the “thing” did not possess this magical fire of life, the thing did not live, could not live.

“It is significant that a common epithet of the king [Egyptian] is di ankh (... ..) which thus written, can be translated as giver of life as well as endowed with life” (206). The hieroglyph contains the ankh, a symbol with the eastern horizon sun, the giver of life.

The Egyptians ascribed this theme to the paradox of Osiris: In death the god Osiris became a focus of vitalizing force—the giver of life (207). Frankfort says: Geb [earth] is a Ka, the sustenance that fosters the gods, makes them live. Geb [earth] produces as sustenance, a vital force (208), an essence of life, a food for the gods. “The king [Pharaoh and the sun] produced barley, not merely in an indirect way, for instance by caring for the farmers or furthering agriculture, but through his own action—by maintaining Maat, the right order which allowed nature to function unimpaired for the benefit of man” (209). In Japan this feat of transferring the recharged vital element to the sun was accomplished by the matinal sun being transfused with fire from the volcano in Mt. Fujiyama. Mythologems of other ethos describe a variety of ways intending to accomplish the transfusion of the vital substance from one person to another.

A rather loose and perhaps more philosophic than algebraic formula for immortality is envisioned: $A + B = K$. In this instance K is a constant, equating immortality. “A” equals living things invigorated by the essence of life. “B” equals methods of magical processing, the methods of mystic

revitalization, the recharging the essence of life with renewed vigor.

The ancient philosophers attempted an assay of the forces secreted in "B". They based their putative contents of "B" upon facts that were observable to them. These observations, although sequential in time, were not necessarily sequential in any other sense. Because darkness preceded light, it does not follow that darkness causes light. Despite the mistakes made by the ancients, their method of proceeding represented good thinking. In fact, the thinking of the ancients exposed one development that has been verified as a scientific fact: Growth required organic nitrogen.

The ancients noticed that there was birth, rebirth, resurrection, light, warmth; verdure mobilized to life and greenness, the production of grain, wine, energy, the presence of the sun in the sky, and many other minute manifestations of life. This is the "A" component in the envisioned formula: $A + B = K$.

The ancient primitives made another set of observations. They noted the fall darkness, coldness, the dissolution of plants, the resolution of the greenness, the shrinking of the live things that had refurbished the earth in the spring. Death collapses life, deflates life. The ancients noted that the fall days were shorter, that the grain was not re-established as an enthusiastic sprout. Winter Time! Everything dead, dark, cold, sunless, putrescent, empty. If not actually dead, everything was dormant, was in a state of suspended animation. The ancients believed that this kind of death, of ashes, of putrescence, of darkness was necessary to the revitalization of the essence of life.

The ancients arrived at this life from death concept by their observation of two facts. First: In the fall and the winter of the year, darkness became quantitatively and qualitatively more in a blaze of glory settled in the grave beneath the western horizon, beyond the Western Gate of Heaven, leaving the world to darkness, to dampness, and to chill.

The ancients noted too that the world did not remain in darkness. In due time the pale, anemic sun appeared. This

pale sun was comparable to the pale, anemic winter, the winter devoid of the red blood and green vigor of life and zest. This pale, anemic sun was not the sun. It was the moon; cold, dead, and not too exhilarating. After a time of "suspended animation" the pale sun became the red sun of the eastern horizon, erupting out of the Eastern Gate of Heaven, a sun full of blood and the flame of life.

The ancients believed that the B part of the formula $A + B = K$ was indispensable to eternal life. Darkness, dankness, offal, corpses reanimated the growing things revitalized by the vernal sun. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*. During the Eleusinian mysteries and rites noisome pigs were planted with the corn, to encourage the growth of their grain (210).

A. J. Levin pointed out that after Cleomenes was hanged, he not only became a hero but he also became a son of the gods. The god-status was zealously desired by many of the characters that appeared in myths for it provided immortality to mortal man. Plutarch declared that the philosophers satisfied the Alexandrians regarding Cleomenes' death and godship by saying that just as dead oxen breed bees, putrefying horses breed wasps, the beetles rise from the remains of dead asses, so too, juices of the coagulation of the marrow of the bones of humans produces serpents. The ancient man assessed the serpent with the qualities of the hero (211).

Influencing rites and magic, physiological functionings were employed to reinvigorate the living things. Ancient primitives seeking after the missing link to immortality added fornication and Herodullia rites and initiations to the hopper. In Java, the farmer and his wife ran naked over the fields. They had intercourse in the garden when the rice first blossomed (212).

Without knowing the nature of ancient thinking, it would be impossible to comprehend the totemic deification achieved by a descent into Hades. The descent into Hades was an initiation death, a catabasis. Catabasis was followed by anabasis, the resurrection. At one time it was believed that catabasis could be achieved by a descent into a sacred moun-

tain. The sun hides in a cave. After a period of seclusion it rises again (213).

THE ORIGIN OF THE CRIPPLED REJECTED HERO MYTHS

The Rejected Crippled Hero Myths originated animistically in the minds of the men who attempted to learn the secret of immortality.

*James Clark Moloney, "The Cultural Source of Power Drives", *Child-Family Digest*, Jan., Feb., 1959.

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The Sanskrit Drama *Shakuntala*: A Psychologic Sounding Board for Hindu Culture

by

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“What went on in the mind of the master (Kalidasa, author of *Shakuntala*) as he pulled the strings of his play *we cannot know*; but in his comedies we see him as a gentle cynic for whom all the world was a stage and the men and women on it players.”*

Today there is a growing awareness of the need of the West for understanding and appreciation of the East. The present broad theme of UNESCO, which was adopted in 1956 at the UNESCO Conference in Delhi, India, was “mutual appreciation East and West”. The UNESCO Conference recognized that perhaps the greatest potential for areas of agreement lies in the respective cultures of the East and the West. The technological superiority of the West — and the previous colonial status of many of the countries of the Middle and Far East — accounts in large measure for the fact that Asian peoples for many generations have been studying and becoming acquainted with the art and science and culture of the West. In the interest of understanding in a greatly diminished world, it behooves the peoples of the West to familiarize themselves and to become acquainted with the classics of the Far East and Middle East.

Although there can be no disputing that both East and West are alike through having a common basis in humanity, the oriental classics present very real challenges. Some

*John Gassner, *Treasury of Theatre* (New York: Simon and Schuster (C. 1935) p. 1366.

knowledge of the social, economic, and religious context out of which these classics arose is of course essential. In the case of the classical Sanskrit Drama *Shakuntala*, such knowledge does not seem to be enough for a real experiencing of this as a play. A study of Sanskrit dramatic theory seems to add additional challenge. A staging of the play, true to the spirit of the play and evocative of the Indian culture out of which the play arose, is likely to be the most satisfactory solution for an appreciation of *Shakuntala* by the peoples of the West. However, since most interested readers and students will be dependent for their understanding and appreciation of a Sanskrit classical drama through reading the play, applied psychoanalysis can provide helpful insights, even perhaps the essential key to unlocking the door to the dramatic validity of this play.

"During the last two decades in archeology, linguistics, anthropology, and psychology, awareness of new evidence along with revised insights regarding older evidence has begun to provide us all, translators, teachers, and common readers, for a world-size view of the process of the creative imagination . . . Alert to the common basis, both our comparisons and our contrasts in our discussions of world literature may acquire more pertinence. We shall also be released from two perilous superstitions which still haunt the literature classroom: The illusion that ideas never cross language barriers until day before yesterday; and the fallacy that irreducible temperamental differences divide East from West".¹

For a study of a play as remote from us, in time and geography, as is *Shakuntala*, it is of prime importance to view the play in its fantasy aspect. Fantasy is here used in the same sense as it may be used in referring to a dream or a day-dream. On this basis, we may proceed with our analysis: as if this were a dream of the author, Kalidasa and we speculate as to what personal meaning it had for him; as if this were a dream with whose heros and heroines members

1. Jeremy Ingalls, "Urban History and Urbanity in Literature," *Indiana University Conference on Oriental-Western Literary Relations*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955) pp. 193-203.

of an audience identify and we discover what deep satisfactions it provides them. For indeed it must have provided a potent unconscious wish-fulfillment, both for audiences contemporary with the play as well as for successive generations of audiences in India, and readers down through the ages, to account for its remarkable survival. So much of ancient times in India, in perishable manuscripts, has undoubtedly been lost to us.

The records of Indian poetry, including Sanskrit drama, stretch back some three thousand years; Neither accident nor chance would account for the play *Shakuntala* today being available to us in its entirety. It is no dangerous assumption that it was a play which was both an effective theatre piece as well as significantly meaningful for its audiences, moreover it is reasonable to assume that it has timeless and universal meaning.²

As will be seen, not only does a psychoanalytic interpretation of a Sanskrit theatre piece provide insights for understanding and appreciation of the play, but also an analysis of the play *Shakuntala* does show that the play is grounded in the universal nature of man.³

Moreover, it reveals to us certain specific characteristics of the conditioning environment of the Indians for whom the play was written. The hidden fantasy at the heart of the play *Shakuntala* suggests that the Indian culture of the Fifth Century A.D. did not promote an easy resolution of the Oedipal Conflict for the adult male Indian. As we return to a

2. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "Sanskrit Poetry and Sanskrit Poetics, *Indiana University Conference and Oriental Western Literary Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1955) p. 3.

3. "The effort of the dramatist or poet is to transmit a sort of decoction of the stable emotions to his audience . . . It is not the original emotion itself . . . it differs from the emotions of everyday life in that it is universalized . . . Visvanatha says that when there is perfect artistic cooperation between artist and audience the result is very like religious trance. There is absence of passion, perfect illumination, blissful consciousness, and complete concentration of attention." Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *Op. Cit.* p. 7.

psycho-analytic analysis of the play *Shakuntala* as if it were a dream, we will discover those characteristics by implication, of Indian culture which obstructed resolution of the Oedipal Conflict. We will also discover that the ultimate resolution offered by this fantasy is the classic, universal resolution; namely, through identification with the appropriate parent.

In the matter of the development of the story and the construction of the plot, modern taste is for a swift forward movement, with an economy of use of incident, each element contributing strongly to the progress of the play toward a strong climax and a satisfying resolution. These might be characterized as our Western prejudices in respect to dramaturgy.

We find in *Shakuntala* what seems at first to be a slight story. There is lacking clearly defined opposing forces precipitating conflict. The pace of the play is leisurely, even dilatory. English-speaking readers will not be disturbed by the introduction of comic characters and comic scenes as would be the French, for we are accustomed to it in the plays of Shakespeare. The mixing of the natural and the super-natural can be puzzling and even disturbing. Our taste is for a neatly constructed plot, in which the hero and/or the heroine through their human efforts effect a resolution; we are likely to find the introduction of the father of the gods for a resolution as mechanical. Such arbitrary solutions have been disparaged by literary and dramatic critics of the West since the time of Euripides.

If we choose to rise above the easy feelings of Western chauvinism and attempt to understand how this play has been meaningful and satisfying and entertaining to peoples of another culture, we may then choose to turn to the writers on dramatic theory of Indian plays.

The play *Shakuntala* is not in a Western sense a tragedy,* and we find that this was not a dramatic type developed in India. The reason or the rationalization given by Indian critics is that to the Indian, since historic times, death is not tragic but that it is potentially a release from the burden of life and potentially offers the promise of the sought-for re-

union with the world-spirit, God. Indian playwrights who aspired to the lofty forms of Indian drama sought to develop the play depicting the life of the hero. The highest type of Indian drama sets forth the exploits and the achievements of the sublime hero. Therefore, we may assume that the *Shakuntala* was consciously intended by the playwright Kalidasa as a play portraying the sublime hero. The curious contradiction is that King Dushyanta is the major character of the play; the heroine, however, provides the title for the play; namely, *Shakuntala*. This is but one of the many seeming contradictions which escape adequate and satisfactory explanation unless one does turn to the play as a fantasy.

To proceed with an analysis of the play on the fantasy level, we deal with the basic themes and symbolic elements of the story. We assume that at the time the play was written, it was written by the playwright Kalidasa for male audiences. As a sacred language, Sanskrit was restricted for usage to the male members of Indian society.

"It was the regular language of conversation between educated men of different provinces . . . the conditional reflexes of childhood and the emotional needs of adolescents played little part in its development. One's mother in those days, one's wife, one's children, never spoke Sanskrit . . . as a general rule Sanskrit was never what one may call a language of the family."⁷

We may assume that members of the male audience

* "Tragedy is wholly absent in Indian drama, and Sanskrit drama presents either a more serious and exalted type which deals with the deeds of the heroes and heroines of Hindu myths and legends, or a less exalted, if more popular type which deals with the lives of contemporary people, both aristocratic and ordinary. Sanskrit drama of this type is a veritable comedy of manners, which has a unique place in the gallery of what may be called - 'Capital Hall of Ancient Man' in world literature . . . Sanskrit plays dealing with the lives of commoners as well as princely aristocrats agree in spirit with the comedies of Shakespeare and the plays of Moliere." Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Introduction" *Indian Drama* (Delhi: National Printing Works, 1956) pp. 8-9.

7. Daniel H. H. Ingals. Op. Cit. pp. 7-8.

would readily identify and become involved emotionally with the hero, King Dushyanta, of the play.

At the opening of the play, the young king is seen in the forest on a hunt. Through poetic dialogue, he is presented to the audience as a formidable warrior, noted for his prowess with bow and arrow. The hero as hunter and the hero distinguished for his skill with bow and arrow, would readily be accepted by literary critics, without benefit of the study of psychoanalysis, as symbols of youthful virility.

The king is in the act of taking aim to transfix with his arrow a deer. With poetic diction the king characterizes the deer; again there would be little or no opposition to accepting the deer, as described, as a foreshadowing image of the heroine, Shakuntala. At this moment, a voice behind the scenes, calls out to the king that he must not kill the deer. (This is but one of many repeated instances in which there are voices from behind the scenes. In a few instances the voices from off-stage are explained and justified realistically. However, in several other instances, these voices are almost disembodied, non-realistic, messages and warnings. This is one element which prompts comparison with common features of a dream).

If one considers this very first incident at the opening of the play as if it were an episode in the dream of a dreamer, one discovers the sexual implication of the episode. The young man through hunting with bow and arrow, and taking aim to strike the deer, symbolizes the search for a sexual partner and the attempt to consummate the sexual act. (As an aside, it may be interesting to note that in slang and jargon the terms of hunting are frequently used in many societies for the seeking out of sexual gratification).

In a dream the off-stage voice, a not uncommon characteristic of dreams, would likely symbolize a frustration through the exercise of some censoring force of the fulfillment of sexual gratification.

This first and initial incident of the play has been explored in some detail as if it were a dream. This has been done to set the stage to indicate certain of the elements and

the issues of the dream-aspect of the play. We shall discover as we work our way through the play, that throughout the fabric of the play as a dream, there is the movement of the male toward the female for sexual gratification and that at various stages of progression, there are frustrating forces. Upon examination we are likely to discover that these differing frustrating forces are symbols of an incapsulated parent as censor. Since there is movement and then there is frustration or interruption, we shall seek in the analysis of the play as a dream, how this conflict and repression is resolved with satisfaction to the identifying members of the audience, those who enter into this as a collective dream.

"The object of drama, according to Indian aesthetics, is therefore not to add to man's confusion by posing fresh problems to him but to help him transcend the turmoil and attain composure. Accordingly, the ideal of the Indian dramatist shifts from a mere character-study to the vocation of a *Rasa*. *Rasa* is a key-word of Indian culture; from taste to supreme beatitude, it conveys a world of significance. The concept of *Rasa* has three phases: First, it refers to the emotional states figuring in the themes of plays; next, it is the aesthetic response in the attuned heart of the spectators; finally, it is that same second state becoming one of complete absorption in which the inner spirit is 'discovered'."⁸

We need to be aware however, that as is characteristic of any dream, there is likely to be both complexity and also the phenomenon of condensation. If we view the developing plot of the play *Shakuntala* simply as a wish-fulfillment dream on the level of sexual gratification, we are very likely to miss the more subtle and interesting goal of the dream. (The use of play and the use of the term drama are used interchangeably as synonymous in this analysis).

As Ernest Jones has pointed out, from the unconscious point of view, the movement of the individual toward the sexual opposite, seeking union has in its overt act a deeper unconscious meaning; the sexual act has within it on the un-

8. V. Raghavan, "The aesthetics of the ancient Indian Drama," *World Theatre, Volume V. 2.* (Brussels: Elsevier, 1956 p. 103).

conscious level, a seeking to dissipate the unconscious anxiety in respect to castration, which in turn is symbolic of anxiety in respect to death.⁹

" . . . It may be of interest to hear what ideas concerning death can be found in the unconscious. In one sense it may be said that there are none, for the unconscious conceives of this idea quite a different way from the unconscious mind. The nearest approach it makes to the latter is when it is a matter of other people's death. This it regards, as does the child, simply in the light of a removal or absence, more or less prolonged, the question of eternity hardly entering in. One's own death, on the other hand in the sense of the extermination of life, is absolutely inconceivable to the unconscious, and, indeed, the idea is hard to realize in consciousness. In the context where one would expect it to occur, one of two ideas appear in its stead.

In the first place, the idea of dying — really of being killed — may be taken in the sense of being severely injured in a vital part, i.e., castrated, and this idea of being castrated (in either sex) is always regarded as the punishment for incestuous wishes.

The second, and deeper way in which the unconscious regards death is as a reversal of the birth act, leading to a return to the pre-natal existence within the maternal womb."

Returning to the analysis of the text of the play, we have noted that through the symbol of the deer hunted by King Dushyanta the heroine Shakuntala has been introduced into the play symbolically. When the king asks of the hermit who has presented himself if the chief of their society is now at home, the hermit replies that the head of their society of hermits has gone "to propitiate Destiny, which threatens his daughter Shakuntala with some calamity". This is of some special interest both because it follows hard upon the previous scene in which the king has been, symbolically, about to assault Shakuntala (the deer). Now we have the overt and ceremonial meeting of the hero and the heroine, the young king and Shakuntala. Immediately in advance of ac-

9. Ernest Jones, "Psycho-analysis and Anthropology" *Essays in Applied Psycho-analysis* (London: The Hogarth Press Ltd., 1951) p. 137-138.

tual gazing upon Shakuntala, the young king experiences a physical omen of his strong attraction to Shakuntala. He says: "What portends my throbbing arm? Why should it whisper here of happy love? Yet everywhere around us stand the closed portals of events unknown." As in a dream, the imagery of the throbbing arm is yet another instance of a characteristic of a dream; namely, displacement. The sexual implication of the throbbing arm is easily deduced. Likewise the use of the image of "closed portals" is apparent sexual symbolism, symbolizing both the virginity of Shakuntala and also an echo of the previous incident in which the King Dushyanta's attempt to transfix with his arrow the deer was interrupted.

"Most literary critics of Sanskrit suppose that every word had three sorts of power. First, the word has the power of direct designation . . . its power to indicate indirectly a peripheral object, . . . its power of suggestion."¹⁰

The playwright then presents us with the scene of the actual meeting of the king and Shakuntala; it is a dramatically effective depiction of young love at first sight. The voiced musings of the young girl Shakuntala reveal to us that the attraction is mutual. Likewise in these musings of the young girl is revealed that Hindus, historically, had a frank and realistic acceptance of the presence of sexual desire in women. Again we have the effective use of erotic imagery: The young Shakuntala says:

"How delightful is the season when the jasmine-creeper, the mango-tree seem thus to unite in mutual embrace! The fresh blossoms of the jasmine resemble the bloom of a young bride, and the newly-formed shoots of the mango appear to make it her natural protector".

As the king gazes upon Shakuntala, he describes her thus: "Her shoulders droop, her hands are ruddy with the glow of quickened pulses; E'en now her agitated breath in parts unwanted tremor to her heaving breasts; the pearly

10. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *Op. Cit.*, p. 16.

drops that mar the recent bloom of the Sirisha pendant in her ear, gathering clustering circles on her cheek; loosed is the fillet of her hair; her hand restrains the locks that struggle to be free".

The erotic imagery of this description of Shakuntala by the love-smitten king is apparent. At this point, he presents to Shakuntala his ring, in which is engraved his name — Dushyanta.

The presentation of a ring in which is inscribed his name is symbolic of both the consummation of marriage and the act of coitus.

Shakuntala leaves the stage, and now at the end of the first act the following incident occurs: "With headlong haste an elephant invades the hallowed precincts of our sacred grove; himself, the terror of the startled deer."

At this point the appearance of the powerful threatening beast may be interpreted symbolically. The king and Shakuntala are forced temporarily to separate. As Shakuntala leaves, she announces to her maiden friend: "A pointed blade of Kusa-grass has pricked my foot; and my bark-mantle is caught in the branch of a Kuruvakabush." Again we have another instance of erotic imagery, all of which strengthens the contention that the play is charged with unconscious sexual energy.

We may assume that the introduction of the marauding elephant at the end of the first Act is a kind of symbol of a threatening castrating parental figure. It may also be characteristic as a dream-symbol of the super-ego frustrating and repressing the "incestuous" sexual desires of the hero. (It is interesting to note that Shakuntala seems to take no cognizance nor indicate any awareness nor interest in the rampant elephant which could be destructive of the dwelling place of the hermits).

At the beginning of the second Act, the king's general, as if offering symbolically an alternative to the potentially dangerous and symbolically incestuous act of sex, tries to re-kindle in the young king an interest in hunting. The gen-

eral says: "Oh- 'tis conceit in moralists to call the chase a vice; what recreation can compare with this?"

Ernest Jones has pointed out that notable among bi-sexual symbols is water;¹¹ imagery involving descriptions of streams, turbulent and rushing water, are scattered throughout the fabric of this play. For example, "All undisturbed, the buffalo shall sport in yonder pool, and with their ponderous horns scatter its tranquil waters, while the deer here and there couched in groups beneath the shade of spreading branches, ruminate in peace," says the king.

This is but one of many instances of the symbolic use of water for erotic imagery.

The second Act presents an exposition of the sincerity and seriousness of the king's feelings for Shakuntala. It is interesting that Mathavya, the attendant and close friend of the romantic young King, when he learns of the king's interest in Shakuntala says this: "Make haste, then, to her aid; you have no time to lose."

In response to this the young king surprises us with this remark: "The lady is not her own mistress, and her foster-father is not at home."

In a seemingly romantic hero, Dushyanta shows a surprising degree of reserve and reticence in the pursuit of his love object.

Once again at the close of the second Act there is introduced a curb on the king's pursuit of his desire.

In contrast to the disguised symbol of the elephant, the symbol of the disapproving and frustrating action of the super-

11. It may be correlated with the astonishing fact mentioned previously, that in the unconscious the two ideas of sexual union (particularly incest) and of re-birth (i.e., return to the mother's womb) are regarded as equivalent . . . in this way it comes about that (re)birth and coitus are equivalent ideas when the object is the mother, and it is thus comprehensible that rituals symbolizing either of these acts have the power of restoring life. This is also the reason why bi-sexual symbols, notably water, play such a prominent part in these rituals, for they are connected with the ideas of both coitus and birth." Jones, *Op. cit.* p. 140.

ego is more overt; in this instance, it is an order from the Queen-mother for the young King Dushyanta to return to the capital of the kingdom. The king recognizes this as a conflict, for he has this to say in response to the message from the Queen-mother: "This places me in a dilemma. Here, on the one hand, is the commission of these holy men to be executed; and, on the other, the command of my reverend parent to be obeyed. Both duties are too sacred to be neglected. What is to be done?"

As in a dream, there is progression toward wish-fulfillment and then there follows in the wake of forward movement, inhibition. Again, unlike the orderliness, realism of a Western play, and very like a dream, just as in the case of the marauding elephant, the mandate of the Queen has been introduced but then is never referred to at any time in the progression and the development of the plot of the play *Shakuntala*.

The third Act brings together the young lovers, and provides the scene in which they are able to confess to each other their mutual love. As a kind of orchestration to the acceleration of the movement of the plot to the coming together of the young lovers, there is an increase and heightening of the use of erotic imagery. These are a few samples: "Here, as she tripped along, her fingers plucked the opening buds; these lacerated plants, shorn of their fairest blossoms by her hand, seemed like dismembered trunks, whose recent wounds are still unclosed; while from the bleeding socket of many a severed stalk, the milky juice still slowly trickles, and betrays her path."

The intense imagery of this passage voiced by the king, suggests both frankly pleasurable erotic images as well as images denoting castration anxiety. Throughout this act the young king is in a heightened emotional state. His words and his feelings expressed in images indicate his concern for the magic power of the holy sage, Shakuntala's foster-father.

As Dushyanta pursues this train of thought, the father-figure becomes displaced by the threatening figure of the

god image, Shiva. There are references to Shiva's anger, "like the flame that is ever hidden in the secret depth of ocean, smoulders there unseen." Reference then shifts to the Hindu god of love, Kama, who in turn had been destroyed by the god, Shiva. Dushyanta has this to say about the god of love, "Welcome to my heart these wounds inflicted by the god, who on his scutcheon bares the monster fish slain by his prowess". It is interesting to note that the god of love has depicted on his shield a monster fish which he had slain. Taking fish as a symbol of the penis, it is an interesting characterization of the god of love as being a castrating god. By the end of Dushanta's long speech, expressing anxiety with his mounting passion, the shift now has been to Shakuntala herself. For example, the speech ends with this "Welcome death itself, so that, commissioned by the lord of love, this fair one (Shakuntala) be my executioner." Through psycho-analytic interpretation, we can see that Dushyanta's anxiety has become intense, for it runs the gamut of fear of first the castrating father-figure and then also fear of the castrating mother-figure, incorporating in the image both the fear and the wish of rebirth at the hands of the mother-figure.¹²

12. "The two means of reunion with the mother, part or whole, (penis or body), are each accompanied by corresponding horrors; first by impotence, i.e., castration, and the second by having to experience once more the terrible passage of the womb canal in the transit through death to paradise. What is astounding is that the two desires are equated in the unconscious mind, as are the two horrors. Yet these two desires — or shall we decide to call them one, as the unconscious does? — are the supreme driving force of our life, and their fulfillment its final goal . . . the primal wish — to re-enter the womb as a whole — is exchanged for the incomplete form of union represented by coitus, and insofar as the primal love-object (the mother) can be exchanged for a permissible and accessible one.

It would seem that neither of these exchanges is ever completely accomplished — at least in the unconscious — so that man is condemned to imperfect satisfaction of his deepest wishes. Hence his restless and insatiable strivings for some other substitute for its heart's desire." Jones, *op. cit.* p. 143.

It would seem that through this verbalizing of his anxiety, Dushyanta experiences some measure of renewed freedom and he is once again able to act and to move toward Shakuntala.

As might be expected of Shakuntala, in view of the submissiveness of Indian women in Indian society, Shakuntala meets the advances of the king with this comment: "Remember, though I love you, I have no power to dispose of myself." At that point at which the king is about to kiss Shakuntala for the first time, a voice behind the scene interrupts the kiss. This is once again an unexplained off-stage voice. The third act closes with the arrival of threatening demons. The demons provide a parallel with the marauding elephant and the message from the Queen-mother.

Just as in dreams there are big jumps in time, so too, between the end of Act III and the resumption of the action of the play in Act IV, Shakuntala and the king have married and the King Dushyanta has returned to his kingdom, leaving Shakuntala with the hermits to await his calling her to his kingdom as his Queen.

Since there is the major turning point of the story, it is well to recapitulate and to introduce a certain important feature of this play as fantasy. Kaladasa seems to go to some complicated lengths in the handling of the father of the heroine, Shakuntala. First of all, the father of Shakuntala is not in fact her father, but is a foster-father. Moreover, he is a hermit, and as a hermit, has taken vows of celibacy. If this were a dream, there would seem to be a need on the part of the dreamer to minimize the potential for competitive feelings on the part of the father in respect to a young swain's paying attention to his daughter. Moreover, in this play the hermit foster-father is absent. This would very much clear the field for the wooing of Shakuntala, on the part of the young King Dushyanta. Unless the father figure is indeed potentially a threatening castrating figure, then why the need for the diminishing of the girl's father and the absence of the father from the scene?

From what we know of Indian society today, which

has remarkable continuity with its past, women are much excluded from male society. Moreover, traditionally Hindu women do not dine at the same table or at the same time with the male members of the family nor with the husbands. At the time these dramas were written, Sanskrit was the exclusive language of the men. The end result of this could only be that as the children were growing up they were in intimate contact with the mother, speaking a vernacular with the mother, and dining apart with the mother. Not until the male children were adult would they speak the common language of Sanskrit with the father. It is easy to see that under these circumstances the father would have become a remote and shadowy figure for the child. It is these fears of the remote and relatively unknown father-figure which could feed and aggravate the unconscious fears of castration at the hands of the father, in view of the unconscious incest wishes. Jones points out to us this very interesting fact: "The very word 'incest' is derived from a Sanskrit word signifying 'undisciplined' - 'unpunished'."¹³

If for a moment we view this play of Kaladasa's as a psychologic sounding board for the feeling and thinking of the Indian audience for which it was written, we find ourselves tempted to speculate as to aspects and characteristics of the development of Indian culture. For example, in relating himself to authority figures, the Indian male would have acute difficulties. We see in the character of the King Dushyanta, the Indian difficulty to take direct and immediate action, arising out of spontaneous feelings. Does this perhaps not throw some light upon the dominant negative attitude of the Indian, both historic and modern, toward life? If in this most basic area of his life, the Indian tends to be immobilized, does this perhaps account for his diffidence at taking action in the solution of life's problems? Might this not result in elaborate rationalizations dignified by the labels of religion and spirituality, for claiming that after all life is of no importance?

13. Jones, *Op. Cit.* p. 19.

Complex and speculative as these questions are, there can be little doubt that from the level of feeling the play *Shakuntala* as a fantasy reveals through analysis, as we shall see, that its satisfaction for the audience for which it was written was a resolution of a basic Oedipal Conflict and the promise of "Nirvana".

Descriptions of Nirvana indicate that it is an apt description of that state of existence known to the unborn infant in the womb. We know from studies of Hindu religion, particularly the concept of the wheel of life, Karma, that in the evolution of conscious Indian thought that the belief in a succession of rebirths, having as its ultimate goal the achievement of non-birth, namely, Nirvana, is a means to dealing with both the strivings of the unconscious for rebirth and the state of existence in the womb, Nirvana, as well as with the anxieties within the unconscious in respect to the ordeal of re-experiencing the horror of the passage of the womb canal.

"And when faced by the grim fact of death, though we may shrink in fear of the thought of the painful rebirth, it unconsciously symbolizes, nevertheless the deepest part of its being cannot refuse the wild hope that once this final struggle is over he may, in spite of all his disappointments, enter at last into the longed-for haven (or heaven) of peace and partake yet again of the lost bliss of Nirvana."¹⁴

We may at this point look ahead and indicate that King Dushanta has by the end of the play achieved a reunion with his beloved, Shakuntala, and also the closing lines of the play indicate that the uppermost wish sought for on the part of King Dushyanta is the following: "and may the purple self-existent god, whose vital Energy pervades all space, from future transmigration save my Soul."

Returning to the fourth Act of the play *Shakuntala*, we discover that the heroine has been waiting in vain for her husband to call her to his side at his capital. Her hand-maiden express their concern. It would seem that King

14. Jones, *Op. Cit.* p. 144.

Dushyanta had already forgotten his rustic bride; therefore, it is curious that following this established fact in Act IV, the young girl, Shakuntala unwittingly offends an aged hermit. In her distracted state she fails to welcome him adequate to his expectations. The upshot of it is that he then delivers a curse that the one of whom she is thinking will have forgotten her. Again there is the quality of the dream, for the aged hermit is never introduced on stage but his voice is heard from behind the scenes. Through the intercession of her hand-maidens, the curse is modified; the "ill-tempered old fellow" relents to this extent: "At the sight of the ring of recognition the spell shall cease." Thus, the ring as a symbol of the consummation (coitus) of the king's marriage with Shakuntala will restore his loss of memory; the implication of the symbol is that proof of the sexual act will be binding upon the king-husband.

Act IV also marks the return of the foster-father, Kanwa. With marked brevity on the part of the playwright, the foster-father not only learns of the marriage of his daughter, Shakuntala, but also expresses enthusiastic approval of the marriage. His quick decision is to send his daughter to the king, her husband. He arranges for an escort for her trip, and as a kind of Indian Polonius, he invests his daughter with his sage advice.

In passing we may note again that Kalidasa is a conservative, for in the advice to his foster-daughter, the aged hermit — apparently to the satisfaction of a male audience for whom the play was written — urges his daughter to an acceptance of the role of the wife's abject submission to the husband. For example, "Should others share thy husband's love, never yield thyself a prey to jealousy; but ever be a friend, a loving friend, to those who rival thee in his affections. Should thy wedded lord treat thee with harshness, thou must never be harsh in return, but patient and submissive."

From the psychological point, perhaps the most revealing and interesting moment of this Act comes at the end. The handmaiden friends of Shakuntala express freely their

grief at the departure of Shakuntala. They tell Shakuntala's foster-father how much they shall miss her. It is his response which is telling and very profoundly true, psychologically. For example, "As for me, I am quite surprised at myself, - now that I have fairly dismissed her to her husband's house, my mind is easy; for, indeed, a daughter is alone — a precious jewel to her parent until her husband claims her. And now that to her rightful lord and master I have delivered her, my burdened soul is lightened, and I seem to breathe more freely."

Coming from the foster-father, we may see revealed in this statement by Kanwa that just as youth has its problems in relation to parents, so too do parents have their problems, on the unconscious level, in relation to youth. By indication, the foster-father revealed that he has not been insensitive to the beauty and charm of his foster-child, Shakuntala. As is universally true, he has been having to deal with his own unconscious incest wishes. The burden he speaks of has been just this strain. In surrendering his daughter to her husband, he has made his peace with the taboos of his culture; with the removal of the daughter the conflict between his Id and his super-ego has been resolved. The fact that unconscious conflict results in tension and drains on potentials of energy, he may indeed say as he does - "My burdened soul is lightened, *and I seem to breathe more freely.*" (Italics mine).

Act V is of less interest on the level of psychological analysis and may be viewed as having its greatest significance in practical dramatic expediency. The playwright is spinning out his story logically for the satisfaction of his audience. Shakuntala is presented at court to the king; as has been expected he fails to remember her and rejects her. At a dramatic moment, Shakuntala remembers the ring and its power to restore her husband's memory; however, she finds she has lost the ring, assuming that it had slipped from her hand at a holy watering place. Viewed as an episode in a dream, it would seem that King Dushyanta is locked in the power of inhibitions. He is not free to acknowledge his wife. At the

close of the Act, through supernatural forces, Shakuntala is taken away from court.

The sixth Act results in the accidental discovery of the ring, which is brought to the king; the king recovers his memory of Shakuntala and is now despondent for his rejection of his wife. The Indian critics of Sanskrit drama place great emphasis upon the episode of separation in such a story. They view such an episode as having the virtue of penance. Such a dramatic theory is of interest in and of itself, for it suggests that both Dushyanta and Shakuntala must pay for their sexuality. Once again this confirms the confusion on the unconscious level of the Indian mind between sexuality and incest.

At the end of Act VI, the charioteer of the mighty god, Indra comes to Dushyanta; the message is that there is a race of giants whom the gods find it difficult to subdue. The king shakes off his gloom and despondency, and he responds enthusiastically to the request of Indra to come to the aid of the gods. Accompanied by the charioteer, the King Dushyanta ascends to the realms above.

In the final Act of the *Shakuntala*, we find the resolution of Kalidasa's play. On the immediate story level of the play, the charioteer takes the victorious Dushyanta to the home of the parents of the god Indra. Here he first encounters a child; through the magic of an amulet the identity of the child as his very own is revealed to him. Then it is through the child that Dushyanta encounters his wife Shakuntala who has been living in seclusion in this home of the parents of the God. With the blessing of the parents of the god Indra the couple are reunited happily.

On the level of the fantasy, we find that it is a superparent which frees Dushyanta from his inhibitions and enables him to acknowledge his wife Shakuntala. The fact that it is not Indra, himself a parent of gods, but Kasyapa, the parent of Indra, who approves of the union of Dushyanta and Shakuntala is provocative of analysis. If, as we have noted, the father in the Indian family was remote and potentially castrating and threatening, it should not surprise us

that the resolution of this fantasy would require a highly-potent and magical father-figure to effect the liberation and resolution of the conflict for Dushyanta, the hero of the play. The parent of the god Indra has this interesting statement to make: "My son, cease to think thyself at fault. Even the delusion that possessed thy mind was not brought about by any act of thine."

But the most symbolic resolution, and the most significant one, is not achieved through the outside agent of a super-parent; the ultimate freeing of Dushyanta is through the universal and the classical resolution of the Oedipal Conflict. In this last act Dushyanta discovers his child and is fully convinced of the child's being his. Through this the king is no longer a youth but has become a father and, through being a father, can identify with a threatening father-figure. Through identification and through the shift of roles from child to parent, Dushyanta's Oedipal Conflict has been broken.

The male audience for whom Kalidasa wrote *Shakuntala*, through identification with its sublime hero Dushyanta would have experienced an energizing of repressed wishes and a mitigation of anxieties which initially caused the repression of desires. The fact that the *Shakuntala* has survived since the Fifth Century A.D. attests to its popularity down through the ages and that it has levels of deep unconscious satisfaction, especially for those who have grown up in the Indian culture.

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Franz Kafka's "Metamorphosis" as Death and Resurrection Fantasy

by

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Kafka's "Metamorphosis" has fascinated many readers who respond to it on an unconscious level of apprehension rather than on a level of conscious understanding. The tale is as weird as many a nightmare they have had, and as strangely, even humorously disturbing. Here are the eternal ones of the dream or the arche-typal constructs of the unconscious subjected to the secondary elaboration and conscious control of the artistic mind. Although most readers feel the import of these characters vaguely, many prefer not to know their total meaning too clearly because of the anxiety involved in facing even artistically created reality, and the revelations of art, like those from the unconscious itself, do challenge and sometimes destroy the frontier defenses of the ego.

Even Kafka himself took care not to examine too closely his dreams, though a man of his religious training must have heard the aphorism, "A dream not understood is like a letter unopened." It is impossible to say whether or not he consciously refused understanding of his multifarious dream-life, but he was certainly fascinated by it. Because of his refusal or maybe his ego's fear of a total invasion of the unconscious, he continued to pay throughout his life for a deep-seated destructive urge against the mother image and an equally strong desire to possess or to be possessed by this archetypal image. What Kafka presumed, or at least claimed, to be detestation, originating in fear, of the father was merely or primarily a masochistic attachment to the denying mother, whom he strove to displace in his creative work as artist. What he thought was a cause was an effect. In his ego he felt like

an unclean pest, and it is to the dung beetle that his ego is reduced in "Metamorphosis."

This fantasy of twenty-three thousand words is neither a case history of a traumatic experience, nor yet a simple initiation romance, though both of these elements are present. "Metamorphosis" is misleading as a title; it should be pluralized since the whole family constellation, father, mother, and sister imagos, are equally transformed in the intrapsychic action. The drama as a whole is merely activated by this upwelling into the conscious of the infantile fantasy introject of the beloved and hated maternal imago, which occurred when the hero was five years of age. This initial conversion of the hero into the image of the dung beetle is followed by the inward discharge or abreaction of the castration fantasy, with progressive release of the oral and anal fixations or cathexes, until a total phallic libido is achieved, as symbolized in the three priapic gentlemen, the restoration of the father and mother imagos, and especially the nubility of the emancipated anima, Grete. There is, obviously, the symbolic death of the form into which the hero had metamorphosed himself, but he resurrects in the recathecting of the family constellation. Kafka leaves to the imagination and the understanding of the discerning reader the completion of this intrapsychic romance, knowing that such a reader understands the projection of the ideal personality of Gregor in the teleological image of the officer ((Gregor himself) in military uniform, with his hand on his sword, and a carefree smile on his face, inviting one to respect his uniform and his military bearing. Until Gregor as beetle has abreacted the infantile, it is the picture of the earth mother, with a fur cap on and a fur stole to which he clings or by which he is possessed, but when all metamorphoses are complete, and his infantile fixation has been expiated, the mother-sister (or mother-daughter) image is reinvested with phallic libido. Thereafter, the officer projection is the dominant, life-giving reality within the psyche.

II.

As "Metamorphosis" opens its intrapsychic action, Greg-

or Samsa, a chronologically mature travelling salesman, finds his ego world flooded by a volcanic explosion of the repressed traumatic experience of the terrible mother and the castrating father. He is, or imagines himself to be, transformed into a huge beetle, an object of consternation to himself, his family constellation, and his superego or employer; he is "so tormented by conscience as to be driven out of his mind and actually incapable of leaving his bed." There is a curious condensation of affect in the beetle: in one sense it is a fantasy introject of the hated or castrating father, for it is the father who attacks the son with the symbolic apples; yet the energy impacted in the form of the beetle represents the amount of libido incestuously invested in the maternal imago, for it is the apple which is used for the symbolic castration, and it is the pre-oedipal (terrible) mother who appears at the end of the story to sweep out the remains of the desiccated beetle into which Gregor Samsa had been metamorphosed. In the concluding scene or movement the father image achieves phallic identity through absorption and dominance of the three cigar-smoking gentlemen, and this genitalized libido transforms the violin-playing Grete into a marriageable young woman. The unconscious is timeless, and apparently incongruous fantasy components coexist in an irrational balance until some strategic maladjustment re-activates the whole inner, repressed content and permits or necessitates the kind of abreaction and progression we find in "Metamorphosis."

The psychic problem of such a hero as Gregor Samsa is to redeem through symbolic death that amount of libido impacted in incestuous longing for the mother's breast or womb and the undetermined amount of libido invested in patricidal destrudo. Though Kafka himself as a man failed to accomplish this up to and through his abortive romance with Milena, it is conjecturally possible that he passed the barrier of the Medusa-encirclement in his last year's liaison with Dora Dyman. However neurotic he may have been as judged by extrovert and ideal standards, his inner light kept him true to his artistic purpose, and he consistently repudiated the

thousand places of rescue for the one place of salvation. He knew there was only one door for him, and he must have advanced endopsychically far enough to recognize the place of meeting, for all of the familiar symbolic forms of the transformation process appear in the Cathedral Chapter of "The Trial." The Garden of Gethsemane is still a lurid experience. The technique by which the pre-oedipal mother is released from her necessary and valuable psychic function of engulfing, strangling, or eating the infant who remains fixated on her breast seems stupidly cruel, and it is crude enough, but she is actually negatively redemptive since the terror she inspires as Sphinx forces the issue and the victim decides a little reluctantly that the possible terrors ahead are at least less obvious than those behind. Gregor's death as desiccated beetle and the disappearance (her work done) of the bony charwoman (with plume) are but two elements, inextricably interwoven, in the pre-oedipal syndrome. Once this terrible phase of the Magna Mater has been energized and discharged (her work done), the benevolent, creative phase is activated, and the mother emerges in her duplicate Grete, who is sister, marriageable woman, and Virgin of Light.

Nor must we be misled by the fact that in the "Metamorphosis" it is the father image which hisses with the noise of many snakes and seems to be the force driving the beetle back into the symbolic womb. A less sensitive and realistic writer would have simplified the drama in a mechanical way, but Kafka had had plenty of personal experience of what he was writing about. He knew that in the nightmare the symbols and images are often bi-sexual and that emotionalized currents are switched from one dominant imago to its sexual complement. The bull-roarer in initiation is not too different from the Lamia, and the serpent who tempts the woman to sin is but a projection of a man's own inhibited sexuality. Such psychological realism is confusing only to those who have never known the depths of their own being; others read it as a sort of imaginative reminiscence of their own experience; hence the universality of Kafka's appeal.

On one level of his being, Gregor Samsa had preferred

his sister Grete to his mother, a more or less normal substitution and yet progression in the psychic evolution of the male. When the Chief Clerk, as employer's representative, arrives on the morning of the metamorphosis, Gregor was sure that if only his sister could have acted for him or explained the situation, the total conflict would have been resolved. For Gregor has failed to catch the train for work or psychic progression, and now the Chief Clerk or superego is about to accuse him of sin. He has had a peculiar love for this violin-playing sister, was fascinated even to the end by her playing, and had even hoped to provide for her musical education at the Conservatory. His train left at five (years) or end of the Oedipal conflict, but here at six-thirty he was still malingering in bed, though a commercial traveler. He has an identity with her and a hope in her which he does not have with either his father or mother. Yet on a deeper level, he is even more involved with the picture he had cut out and framed, of the lady with a fur cap and a fur stole, holding out to the spectator a huge fur muff into which the whole of her forearm had vanished. He would rather bite his dear sister Grete than to permit her to remove this picture from his room. In fact, in most abject terror, he covers this picture with his whole body as though embracing it in defiance of all the members of his family constellation. This Sphinx maternal imago is the anthesis of the marriageable Grete who appears as the action ends as the prototype of the woman he will marry. The butcher boy coming up the stairs with fresh supplies is the dream symbol which guarantees that though deceased in his infantile form, the psyche as a whole is very much alive; the libido formerly invested as incestuous toward the mother and its concomitant patricidal destrudo are, in fantasy, replaced by the new family constellation.

The castration fantasy thus resolved is a necessary, impersonal drive of the psyche toward wholeness or completion. A week before the actual metamorphosis or reversion to the primary identification with the preoedipal mother, Gregor had cut out of the magazine this picture of the woman

in furs and with his own precious knife had made the fretwork frame for it. This symbolic castration appears in the cut finger, the white spots, the wounded trailing foot, and finally in the splintered glass and the corrosive liquid splashed on the face of Gregor when his sister Grete tries to remedy his condition. Grete is no less metamorphosed than Gregor, for instead of remaining the spiritual twin or affinity of Gregor, it is Grete who finally refers to the metamorphosed Gregor as "It", and insists that unless he is disclaimed and rejected the whole family will disintegrate. Here is consummate irony or reversal in a fantasy which though grim is not depressing, for the autoerotic factor involved in the substitution of the sister for the mother is finally transcended in the revitalization of both feminine imagos and the rejuvenescence of the father image.

Grete as daughter fulfills the inner intention of the mother, Mrs. Samsa, just as Persephone duplicated and fulfilled the being of Demeter. Grete even assumes some of the asthmatic symptoms of her mother, who is given to choking for lack of breath, coughing hollowly into her hand, and looking around with a wild expression in her eyes. Such symptoms in the fantasy introject, of course, indicate clearly enough the traumatic terror of the infant denied the breast and projecting onto the mother image his strangling rage with his own impotence. Accordingly, when Grete comes into the room, she rushes to open the window as though she too could not stand the fetid atmosphere, and it is Grete who insists on getting the chest as symbolic womb out of the room (or psyche), or since the representation is by reversal, getting Gregor as beetle out of the womb. Later, when the witch mother with broom and plume (the latter distressing even to Mr. Samsa) has done her work, all the libido formerly invested in her as destrudo is transformed and allocated to Grete, who is now fully dressed, ready for work, without band or collar. There is thus a psychic unity latent in the mother in her consciously accepted form, the woman in furs as infantile fantasy introject, the bony charwoman as preoedipal, destroying mother, and the changing

forms of Grete. Such is a typical psychic progression of the anima in man as we know it in the universal symbolism of myth and dreams.

III.

A more detailed analysis of the time and place elements in this fantasy of death and resurrection will clarify the story. The hour-year analogue indicates that Gregor, who awakens thus metamorphosed into a beetle, should have caught the five o'clock train for work as a commercial traveller, that is, a psychic change should have occurred at the normal age of five, when the first awareness of a divided or sinful nature usually appears with the formation of the superego as accuser or inner conscience, in a confusing or distressing form. But here it is, already six-thirty (Gregor is six and a half years old); he has missed the train or psychic energy necessary for progression, and what is more he is unaccountably metamorphosed into a beetle. In fact, the alarm or inner monitor should have sounded at four, but something in the psyche failed to function, and now that he is ready to make the transitus from adolescence to maturity, the repressed fixation of the five-year old boy is activated, the conscious ego is invaded, and Gregor is reduced to the form of the denigrated maternal ego he had introjected as fantasy, probably while he was at his mother's breast. The woman in furs to which he is obsessively devoted is a variant of the cat or Sphinx mother, a constant archetype in all cultures.

As the topography shows, his personal room in this house, which represents the psyche as a whole, is his mother's womb. The chest and the writing table, over which so much anxiety develops, condense or concentrate this womb and the onanistic fantasies associated with such a fixation. To the left opens a door to a room occupied by his father and mother, or more correctly, his infantile fantasy introjects of these imagos. To the right or conscious, progressive side of his room, the life side, is the room occupied by his sister Grete, with whose dressing he is so much concerned because of its symbolic significance. There is a living room to the front, or Freudian preconscious, where as in "The Castle," there

is traffic between the ego and the unconscious. The kitchen to the rear is the ordinary dream representation of the sources of the libido, where often enough women are preparing food for the renewal of the distressed ego, which is now under the flood or invasion of the basic fantasy introjects of the primary imagos, including the castrating father. It is necessary to remember that with the departure (their work done) of the three priapic gentlemen the butcher boy comes up the stairs (from the unconscious) with new supplies.

An acute sense of anxiety accompanies this metamorphosis; there will not be another train until seven o'clock. In the meantime, the porter will have informed the chief clerk that Gregor has not reported for work, and sure enough, this representative of the employer or superego, immediately arrives to investigate, to accuse, and to threaten. The father has not been able to work for five years; that is, the father has been psychically inactive as invigorating model or type, and the ego alone has been trying to run the household. What will become of this family constellation now that Gregor is reduced to the image of the destroying mother is of great concern. Not all of his father's original or potential capital has been lost; there is still some latent constructive energy in the paternal imago. Gregor, in fact, has been working to pay off his father's debts (or his debts to his father), unaware of this residual capital which does float the family through the misfortune which comes upon them through this metamorphosis of Gregor. The father image moves through the anality of the bank messenger (with his most precious uniform) to the point where it is he who orders the priapic gentlemen to clear out in order that he can take over. In other words, the endopsychic father image is metamorphosed as the original or prototype of Gregor himself. What happens to the father image is happening within the total psyche of Gregor. And likewise, the mother image moves through the successive forms of the Sphinx, the asthmatic mother who receives the smothered cry of the child, the charwoman, to the form in which she is cleansed and released into the expectation of a new life in better surroundings. And Grete

is transformed from the onanistic fantasy into the marriageable young woman expectant of a husband.

As Gregor first becomes aware of his breakdown, he knows he is wounded, for there is a series of small white spots on his belly. When he tries to scratch the itching surface, a cold shiver runs through him. His time problem is now to get out of bed at least by 7:15, but when the chief clerk arrives from his employer's office, Gregor's consternation is so great that he tips out of bed, only to discover that the lower part of his body is extremely sensitive. An almost comic displacement of anxiety now occurs when Gregor wonders why a chief clerk instead of a porter should have been sent to alert him, a commercial traveller who had so faithfully performed his duties. The superego, which has direct access to the secrets of the unconscious is always wire-tapping, and then reflecting its knowledge in accusing threats and psychosomatic symptoms. Gregor seems to be greatly concerned lest the chief clerk blame his parents for his failure to catch the five-o'clock train and begin to dun his parents for their unpaid debts, which, of course, are Gregor's or the equivalent of his failure to discharge his infantile fixation on the womb and his fear of his father, who must threaten castration in order to assist the ego into a mature appropriation of libido. In the performance of his unpleasant and yet not too unpleasant task, the chief clerk warns Gregor that his work has not been satisfactory of late, that Gregor may lose his position with the firm, and somewhat grimly though humorously implies that Gregor's absence may be due to the payment of certain sums of cash recently to Gregor. The last is the explanation of the debacle; cash represents here available libido to be reinvested in new, mature forms of the family constellation and the new adjustment of Gregor's ego. If there had been no resurgence of libido for a reconstructive effort, there would have been no metamorphosis; a status of repetition-compulsion would have continued, and this story of death and resurrection could not have been written.

But the frightened ego first resorts to a system of ration-

alized defense, stalling for time to take in the nature of the metamorphosis. Grete, the sister, sobs when Gregor does not open the door, and the chief clerk or superego just will not take the part of Gregor any longer, though Gregor assures him that he will take the eight o'clock train and begs him not to blame his parents. When Gregor himself turns against the chief clerk, his threat is so effective that comically enough the chief clerk retreats involuntarily and somewhat fearfully. Ego is still here. From the floor Gregor tries to lever himself into an upright position by means of the chest or symbolic womb within his room. He makes the services of the locksmith unnecessary by opening the door with his strong jaws. The key, the locksmith, and the jaws thus integrated by condensation reveal the oral origin of the neurotic jam. His mother, her face half-hidden in her breast, falls on the floor, and his father weeps as Gregor stands half in and half out of his room. As the chief clerk backs away from him as though driven by an invisible pressure, his hand clapped on his mouth, we recognize that we have begun to identify quite closely with Gregor in his effort to withstand the conflict. A humorously pathetic, yet psychologically appropriate move, is made when Gregor tries to conciliate the chief by flattery of conscience money by saying that he prefers the chief clerk to the head of the firm, not knowing that the two are merely different forms of the same function. Having done his work of convicting Gregor of psychic sin by forcing on him the condensed image of the denying mother and the denigrated father, the chief clerk leaves. His mother exclaims, "Help for God's sake!". Gregor is certain that had Grete been there, all would have gone well.

Naturally enough, within this intrapsychic action, the paternal image now takes over the symbolic phalli left by the chief clerk, or shall we say that conscience equips the father image with the necessary costume for his role as initiator and castrator: the walking stick, the hat, and the great cloak. As initiator the father now flourishes a newspaper threateningly, and hisses like a snake, driving Gregor back into his room. This is the artistic counterpart to the initia-

tion rites as described by Geza Roheim in "The Eternal Ones of the Dream." In real terror and self-pity, Gregor sees only the father who threatens castration, not knowing that upon completion of the psychic transformation, this same father will make the sign of the cross, with the women, over the defunct beetle.

This *lex talionis* is a requisite (in spite of the rational mind) for the redemptive or rebirth process. As the intrapsychic action intensifies, the hissing no longer sounds like that of a single father; the principle of masculinity becomes multitudinous and coercive. The father does not think of opening the other half of the door, and as the beetle is jammed in his retreat through it, his father bruises the traditional flank (displaced castration), and Gregor's blood flows freely, staining the white floor. As in the ancient mysteries and some forms of Christianity, without the shedding of blood there is no redemption. As the father closed the door with the stick, one of the beetle's little legs trailed uselessly behind him; the castration motif is complete, and the neophyte knows the terror and the pain of masochistic submission to the destroying mother and patricidal destrudo. It is a form of death inflicted as retaliation for a death willed in fantasy. The dynamic of the unconscious or total psyche is not touched by scientific advance, and modern man recapitulates not only the embryonic but also the endopsychic history of his species. It was to such a fulfillment of the law that the doctor from the country returned in his dream one night to visit the boy whose suppurating wound was noisome with worms the size of your little finger.

IV.

Interest is now distributed over the whole family constellation, for as in every reintegration process a dynamic shift of energy value at one point means a redistribution throughout the psyche. As Gregor awakens in the room he has occupied for five years, he smells the fresh bread and milk sops, and at first he is so pleased that he buries his head up to his eyes in the mess, much as he once nuzzled into his mother's breast. He is safe at least, and the object of great

concern (like many a neurotic) to his family. It is his sister Grete who first looks into the room and finds the "beetle" hiding under the sofa. The curious masochistic desire to be denied, the price paid for oral aggression, is now manifested in Gregor's refusal of the fresh milk and his preference for old, decayed vegetables. The family cook (former source of refreshment) now leaves in alarm, but promises to be quiet about the family scandal, and her place is taken by a sixteen-year old servant girl, who is a sort of earthy duplicate of Grete. Whereas the first appearance of the father was that of a fat and sluggish man who had lived a laborious but unsatisfactory life, and it had been assumed by Gregor that he was penniless, it is now found that not all the capital has been lost, that enough remains with careful planning to afford simple living conditions for a few years. It is upon this fact that the whole reintegration of the family constellation depends.

As time passes, the hospital across the street, symbolic of the therapeutic process involved, is now beyond Gregor's range of vision; he might have believed that his window gave out onto a desert waste, a mere gray sky over a gray land. Imaginatively we are in the same realm as that in which Titorelli painted heathscapes in "The Trial", the waste land or the wilderness where rebirth alone can take place. Grete leaves an armchair by the window for her metamorphosed brother. There he has the appearance of a bogey, and a stranger might have thought that he was lying there in wait for his sister, intending to bite her. As his initial orientation to his sister had duplicated the infant's first dependence upon the benevolent mother, so now he duplicates the ambivalent reversal and attack upon the mother's breast, refusing her proffered food and ready to bite her. The curious breast-apple identity appears not only in the popular version of the Garden of Eden sin, but in the apples thrown by the father (*lex Talionis*) into the back of the beetle Gregor.

Observing his delight in crawling around on the walls, ceiling, and floor, mother and sister make an effort to remove

such furniture as might inconvenience or obstruct the movements of this huge beetle. Between their points of view a conflict develops: the mother feels so sorry for Gregor she would finally leave the writing desk and chest; but the sister insists on trying to remove them. It was in this chest that Gregor had kept the knife with which he did his fretwork, such as that for the frame of the picture of the lady in furs he cut out of the magazine. Gregor would rather bite his sister than let the furniture in his room be disturbed, and he clings passionately to this picture of the primary destructive cat, or Sphinx, mother. At this point his sister's attitude begins to change radically. The mother sinks to the floor crying out in a hoarse voice, "Oh God, Oh God", and Grete shakes her fist at Gregor for thus disturbing their mother. As she strives to revive her mother with aromatic spirits, Grete lets the bottle fall on the floor, a splinter cuts Gregor's face, and the corrosive medicine is splashed upon him. In hysterical frenzy Gregor as beetle collapses upon the table, and the fantasy has thus repeated symbolically the source of the original introjection and fixation in the traveling salesman for whom the alarm didn't go off at four o'clock. But still true to her restorative or rebirth function, the mother loosening one petticoat after another, sinks into the arms of her husband, begging him to spare the life of her son.

Whereas in his story, "In the Penal Colony", the private escaped the vagina dentata, and the superego died the death it intended to inflict, while the Explorer left the colony forever, in "Metamorphosis" the conflict is solved by recathecting through metamorphoses the members of the family constellation, and though the story ends with the death of the metamorphosed Gregor, that situation or condition is merely a form of the night-sea journey, the whale's belly, or the descent into Hell, from which the hero triumphantly returns. The last act of the initiatory drama we shall now discuss.

In the supplication of the fainting mother to the father that he spare the life of her son there is a suggestion of the universal mother of grace. The father sleeps in his uniform though he doesn't go to work until six A.M. The mother

gets employment sewing for an underwear firm, and Grete begins to learn shorthand and French in order to make her way in the world. The living room door is left open so that Gregor will not have to eavesdrop in order to know what is going on in this intrapsychic household. Hard times, nevertheless, descend upon the household. Most important of all, a gigantic charwoman comes in to do the household work morning and evening. When his father goes to bed, Gregor's wound begins to ache, as though there were some connection with the primal scene or infantile voyeurism, as is recorded in Kafka's personal life. Gregor's injustice collecting becomes complete as he sees his formerly loving sister pushing any old food toward him and leaving all manner of filth in his room. The anal libido even reverts upon his own metamorphosed body as it trails with filth along the floor. The bony charwoman, however, with her plume or phallus does not fear the pseudo-aggression of Gregor; she just commands him to come along now and threatens to bring a chair down on his head. But the split mother image remains partially protective and creative, for she cleans Gregor's room with several buckets of water. But Gregor is upset; the sister storms at the mother; and the father reprimands both mother and sister. Such is the intrapsychic confusion during the progressive phases of the rebirth process. The restored father image refuses the propitiatory advances of Gregor; he now stands erect, and advances with grim visage toward Gregor. When Gregor tried flight, he experienced breathlessness due to a lung condition. This is reminiscent of a curious personal condition of Kafka, who claimed that his spitting up of blood was of psychic origin, just like something to save him from marriage.

But at long last there appear the priapic deities as in the story, "In the Penal Colony". These three gentlemen, symbolising the masculine genitals, now command the household, dominating the father, the mother, and the sister, until their authority is transferred to, or taken over by, the father himself. This is the climactic metamorphosis. As phallic entities they object to any vestigial analism; they have a special

antipathy for dirt. As they assume command, the garbage can and the ash can are unceremoniously placed in Gregor's room. Gregor hears the sound of their masticating teeth; the food of men is theirs, while he starves because of his toothless jaws. "Coming events cast their shadow before". The bearded gentlemen are the form of libido in which he is to be resurrected, or would be, had Kafka chose to complete the implied psychic action.

Even under these conditions, Gregor is greatly stimulated by his sister's violin playing, though the priapic deities do not enjoy it. He believes, ironically, that he can now get the unknown nourishment he craves (as indeed he can), and will spit on anyone who tries to take his sister away from him. But Grete prefers these new lodgers to her metamorphosed brother. They don't want filth-covered Gregor in their room at all; they smoke their cigars with great irritation, and the middle one, the one with real authority, spits on the floor derisively and threatens to bring suit against Mr. Gregor for having such a beetle around at all. Grete renounces Gregor as a nameless IT, insisting that unless they get rid of IT, the father and mother will die. Once more the symbolic vestige of the coughing and choking mother activates while Gregor is maneuvered back into his room by his father. There in a state of vacant meditation and tender reminiscence of his family, Gregor sees the breaking dawn through his window and quietly expires. This is the "Consummatum est": the infantile ego dominated by incestuous libido and patricidal destrudo is dead.

As a perfectly classic archetype, the charwoman, seeing Gregor dead upon the floor, lets out a whistle: "It's lying here dead and done for." Grete, with whose dressing Gregor has been so much concerned, now emerges fully dressed from the door of the living room, where she has been sleeping since the advent of the priapic or phallic gentlemen. With a callous sense of the amenities of life, the bony charwoman or preoedipal mother proves that Gregor is dead by pushing his corpse away with her broomstick. On the surface at this point she has conquered. But Mr. Samsa crosses himself, and

his example is followed by the three women. The death of such a regressed, fixated libido, properly symbolized by a dung beetle, is indeed to be blessed if the psychic energy impacted in the form has already been channeled into the resurgent life of the other members of the family constellation. However grim the intrapsychic action of Kafka's stories, there are few in which the discerning reader does not see planted or suggested the abiding hope, the confirmed intention, of transcending his conflict and achieving wholeness. Often, as here, there is an incompleteness, for as artist, Kafka was true to himself as man.

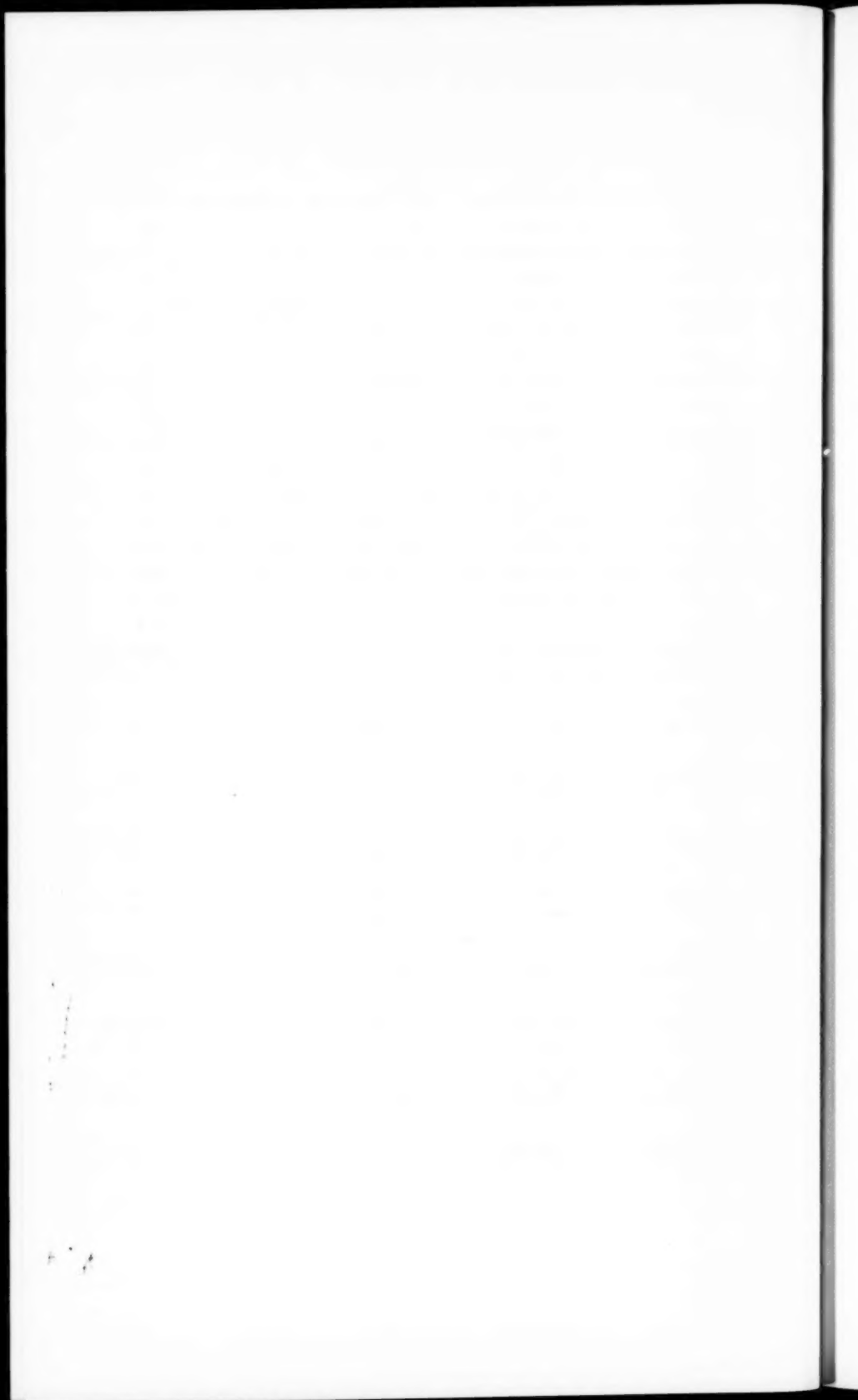
With the curious condensation, representation by reversal, and transference characteristic of the dream, these three gentlemen to whom the whole family has been so attentive come out of their room and demand their breakfast. But no breakfast has been prepared. In fact, Mr. Samsa now orders these three gentlemen out of the house, while he, in his splendid uniform, takes his wife on one arm and his daughter on the other. The phallic drive also has done its work. Gregor has become his own father; he is indeed metamorphosed. As the three gentlemen go down the stairs, they are metamorphosed into the butcher boy coming up the stairs with fresh supplies. Thus eros triumphs over thanatos. Since her morning's work is done, the charwoman is leaving. Mr. Samsa is still annoyed by the ostrich feather standing upright on her hat, for the mother of death is a most disturbing archetype in any psyche. She goes out, whirling violently as she always does, and with a frightful slamming of doors.

As they move on to the larger and fuller life, the members of Gregor Samsa's family constellation incorporate his own resurrected and transformed libido, and thus one of the most curious tales of death and resurrection is completed. From the very beginning of the action, Gregor was not only fixated in the depths of his being on the woman in furs; there was also that ideal portrait of himself, as a young officer, proud of his uniform and manly bearing, with his own God-given sword in his hand. Truly enough, the charwoman did dispose of the dead dung beetle, but the sword of Gregor

disposed of the charwoman. The malignant mother has become the beloved sister, in the nuptial flight of her soul, ready for marriage. And, of course, the anima is the soul of man.

It seems, therefore, that though "Metamorphosis" is paradoxical because the dynamic transformation of libido does not center in the return or resurrection of the hero as centered in a new, absolute Self, Kafka has incorporated all the essential elements of the monomyth except this return. And this return is diffused into the family constellation, with the substitution of the reanimated and completely changed Grete (as anima) for the ego of the hero. We might say that Grete as anima or beloved is the psychic alternate which is resurrected or makes the return. It may be that Kafka could not project a completely redeemed ego because of the incommensurables existing between the old or artistic ego and the Self he wanted as man to be.

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Kafka and Dickens: The Country Sweetheart

by

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At one point in his diaries Franz Kafka noted an enormous debt to the English novelist, Charles Dickens. In technique and detail, his first novel, *Amerika*, was "a sheer imitation" of Dickens' *Copperfield*: "The story of the trunk, the boy who delights and charms everyone, the menial labor, his sweetheart in the country house, the dirty houses, *et al.*, but above all the method. It was my intention, as I now see, to write a Dickens novel, but enhanced by the sharper lights I should have taken from the times and the duller ones I should have got from myself. . ."¹ This passage was first explicated by E. W. Tedlock, Jr., in a splendid article called "Kafka's Imitation of *David Copperfield*."² Tedlock concentrated here on the five specific parallels, and explained four of them as follows: "The story of the trunk" referred to David's loss of his trunk, by theft, on the way to Dover, and to Karl Rossmann's loss of his box, again by theft, on the road to Rameses; the "delightful boy" was Steerforth, for Dickens, and Mr. Mack for Kafka — two sophisticated, patronizing figures who attract and baffle their naïve admirers; "menial labor" referred to the warehouse chapters in *Copperfield*, and to the lift-boy chapters in *Amerika*; while "the dirty houses, *et al.*," included the tenement where David finds the abandoned Emily and the apartment house where Karl is imprisoned by two vagabonds. As for "method," Tedlock rightly pointed to the "moral and emotional ambiguity" in each author's work, and to their common use of "the technique of the grotesque." His one difficulty was with the "country sweetheart" item, for which he attempted three different explanations, none of them quite adequate. My aim

in the present paper, then, is to account more fully and accurately for the troublesome parallel, and to demonstrate its relation to each writer's method.

Kafka's interest in this theme begins with an early fragment, "Wedding Preparations in the Country." As that story opens, young Eduard Raban is plainly reluctant about visiting his fiancée. He is expected that evening at her country home, but as he stands in an open doorway, waiting for the rain to stop, he dreams of various ways to avoid the journey:

"And besides, can't I do it the way I always used to as a child in matters that were dangerous? I don't even need to go to the country myself, it isn't necessary. I'll send my clothed body. If it staggers out of the door of my room, the staggering will indicate not fear but its nothingness. Nor is it a sign of excitement if it stumbles on the stairs, if it travels into the country, sobbing as it goes, and there eats its supper in tears. For I myself am meanwhile lying in my bed, smoothly covered over with the yellow-brown blanket, exposed to the breeze that is wafted through that seldom aired room. The carriages and people in the street move and walk hesitantly on shining ground, for I am still dreaming. . . .

"As I lie in bed I assume the shape of a big beetle, a stag beetle or a cockchafer, I think. . . . The form of a large beetle, yes. Then I would pretend it was a matter of hibernating, and I would press my little legs to my bulging belly. And I would whisper a few words, instructions to my sad body, which stands close beside me, bent. Soon I shall have done — it bows, it goes swiftly, and it will manage everything efficiently while I rest."³

Eduard's macabre scheme suggests the regression image from a later story, *The Metamorphosis*, and stamps his reluctance as a form of arrested adolescence. Like the giant vermin in that novella, he wants to avoid adult responsibilities

by forcing others to assume them. There is a curious precedent for this in *David Copperfield*, where the carrier Barkis is unable to propose directly to Nurse Peggotty, whose cakes and pastries have aroused his marital appetite. Instead, he asks young David to send her the cryptic message that "Barkis is willin," and later "that Barkis was a-waitin' for a answer." Barkis lives close to the nurse himself, but like Eduard Raban, he sends a child's "body" on his marital errands. There is something childish, as well, about his preference for "apple parsties" and his fear of direct speech with maiden ladies. There is even something dreamlike and vague in his actions, as if he somehow expressed a part of David's inmost self. And from the evidence in the novel, it seems he does. When David's mother is about to marry Murdstone, for instance, it is Barkis who takes the boy away from home, and waits silently in his cart while the mother kisses him goodbye; and later, when the boy goes to school, he waits in silence as the motherly Peggotty embraces David: "After another and a final squeeze with both arms, she got down from the cart and ran away . . . without a solitary button on her gown. I picked up one of several that were rolling about [relates David], and treasured it as a keepsake for a long time."⁴ It is then that Barkis makes his famous proposal, through David, to the woman who already substitutes for the boy's mother. It seems almost superfluous to add that David, too, waits silently outside, while Barkis and Peggotty get married, that he dreams that night about dragons, and awakens next morning with Peggotty calling to him, as usual, from beneath his window at Yarmouth, "as if Mr. Barkis the carrier had been from first to last a dream too."⁵

As this development shows, it is hard to tell whether Barkis sends David to do his courting, or whether David sends Barkis to marry his nurse, as a proxy for his own desires. In either case, the split in the sender's mind would have appealed to Kafka, whose hero suffers from a similar disturbance. Of course, there is no question of direct influence here; the point is, simply, that Kafka first connects the sweetheart theme with reluctant courtship and sexual arrest,

and that Dickens provides examples of a similar complex.

In both *Copperfield* and *Amerika*, however, the sweet-heart theme is fused with economic concerns. In Kafka's novel, Karl Rossmann travels to the country with the businessman, Mr. Pollunder, to meet his daughter Clara. As they drive through New York City, the main roads are blocked by a demonstration of metal-workers on strike, and their car is diverted by mounted police into side-alleys. But Karl ignores the evidence of economic strife, and leans back happily on Mr. Pollunder's arm: "the knowledge that he would soon be a welcome guest in a well-lighted country-house surrounded by high walls and guarded by watch-dogs filled him with extravagant well-being."⁶ Karl's trip is based on Chapter XXVI of *Copperfield*, in which David goes to the country with his employer, Mr. Spenlow, to meet his daughter Dora. David too enjoys his journey, as his employer defines their profession as "a privileged class," and explains legal folderol as a quiet family game, with expenses falling on the clients, and with the price of wheat highest when lawyers are busiest. David is baffled by the connection between law and wheat, but he defers to his employer and makes no objection. "I was not the man to . . . bring down the country," he declares, for like Rossmann he sides for the moment with a privileged class. In Kafka's novel, however, the economic conflict seems more visual and dramatic, thanks to the "sharper lights" derived from modern times.

As I have already hinted, the lights applied are Freudian as well as Marxist. When Pollunder drives off with Karl, they sit close together in the car, and Pollunder holds the boy's hand while they talk, or puts his arm around him. At the house itself he again encircles Karl and draws him between his knees; and at one point he leads him away from an apparent rival and blows his nose for him. Karl himself compares Pollunder's lips with his daughter's, and seems anxious to lure him away, in turn, from his massive colleague, Mr. Green. These two lecherous elders are further abetted by the aggressive daughter, Clara, who wants Karl to come to her bedroom, with her elders' approval. Thus Karl re-

sembles an innocent victim of a sexual free-for-all, or better still, a sexual charade, though he also contributes to this charade without his conscious knowledge.

With the same perfect innocence, David enacts a comparable charade in *Copperfield*. In the early chapters, he has been cut off from his mother by his wicked stepfather, Mr. Murdstone, and by the latter's prim, self-righteous sister. As David himself explains, this conflict turns on his spelling lessons:

Shall I ever forget those lessons? They were presided over nominally by my mother, but really by Mr. Murdstone and his sister, who were always present, and found them a favourable occasion for giving my mother lessons in that miscalled firmness which was the bane of both our lives. . . . I had been apt enough to learn, and willing enough, when my mother and I had lived alone together. I can faintly remember learning the alphabet at her knee. To this day, when I look upon the fat black letters in the primer, the puzzling novelty of their shapes, and the easy good-nature of O and Q and S, seem to present themselves again before me as they used to do. But they recall no feeling of disgust or reluctance. On the contrary, I seem to have walked along a path of flowers as far as the crocodile book, and to have been cheered by the gentleness of my mother's voice and manner all the way. But these solemn lessons which succeeded those, I remember as the deathblow at my peace, and a grievous daily drudgery and misery. They were very long, very numerous, very hard . . . and I was generally as much bewildered by them as I believe my poor mother was herself.⁷

Under this new external pressure, the boy funks his lessons and is beaten for his failure. David bites his oppressor's hand, however, and for this he is locked in his room five days and cut off from his mother in the most literal sense. His confinement resembles that of Gregor Samsa, in Kafka's story, *The Metamorphosis*, and suggests once more the close

affinity of these authors.⁸ But more pertinently, it directly parallels David's later predicament, when his relations with Dora Spenlow are abruptly severed. For the agent of that severance is none other than Miss Murdstone, who suddenly reappears in the novel as Dora's paid companion and protector. Dora herself is a frail, charming, helpless girl, who resembles David's childish mother,⁹ while her father is a businessman like Murdstone, who at one point had employed David in his wine warehouse. In this sense, the entire cast from the early chapters has reassembled, in symbolic guise, to reenact the early crime. Thus, when Miss Murdstone discovers David's letters to Dora, she exposes him before the employer-father, the engagement is broken off, and David is deprived once more of an oedipal attachment:

I submitted, and, with a countenance as expressive as I was able to make it of dejected and despairing constancy, came out of the room. Miss Murdstone's heavy eyebrows followed me to the door — I say her eyebrows rather than her eyes, because they were much more important in her face — and she looked so exactly as she used to look, at about that hour of the morning, in our parlour at Blunderstone, that I could have fancied I had been breaking down in my lessons again, and that the dead weight on my mind was that horrible old spelling-book with oval woodcuts, shaped, to my youthful fancy, like the glasses out of spectacles.¹⁰

This connection with his spelling lessons is revealing, for Miss Murdstone's disapproval of them has just been matched by her disapproval of the love letters. As I have already shown, David had been beaten by his stepfather for that early lapse, and then kept in isolation from his mother. Now another father defeats him, and stands between him and the girl he loves. The sexual charade is complete, and along with it, the thematic parallel with Kafka's novel. In both stories, a young man journeys to the country with a commercial father, and becomes entangled there in a bizarre charade, expressive of his arrested development. In both stories, that

is, the theme of economic subservience is expressed through sexual immaturity: for the moment, the fathers triumph in both realms, and the sons are kept in economic and sexual servitude. Karl is shoved out of the country house to join two vagabonds, while David continues his legal work with no hope of marriage.

If the sexual parallel seems more thematic than circumstantial, this is only because Karl stands at an earlier stage of development than David; his troubles are bisexual rather than oedipal, and they derive from an earlier portion of Dickens' novel and involve a different sweetheart. Because Tedlock thinks here in terms of character alone, he fails to catch this clever synthesis. In Clara Pollunder he sees first "a comically modern reversal" of Dora Spenlow — an aggressive, knowing and violently athletic girl, and her delicate, foolish opposite. His third solution, that Little Em'ly is the country sweetheart, seems even less convincing; but it is only tentatively held, and can be thrown out here as peripheral and irrelevant. His second brief suggestion seems quite valid, however, since the scornful and capricious Estella, in *Great Expectations*, more directly resembles the perplexing Clara. Even her mysterious country home, with its grotesque banquet chamber, dark, winding corridors and wanderings by candlelight, strongly suggests the country house in *Amerika*. Then too, young Pip is commanded to play with her by the strange Miss Havisham, while Karl is virtually ordered to "have a pleasant time" with Clara. In the course of such play, both boys disguise their mortification before taunting sweethearts, and both engage in violent struggles. But Pip's restraint with Estella is not self-imposed, like Karl's with Clara, and he does prove more handy with his fists, in defeating another boy, than the absurdly ineffectual Karl, who is quickly thrashed by Clara.

What seems interesting here is the recurrence of the same set of elements in both novels — the mysterious house, the taunting girl, the mortified boy, and the violent struggle. Yet a similar set occurs in *Copperfield* itself, when David visits the home of Steerforth and meets his would-be sweet-

heart, Rosa Dartle. Rosa loves to confound her listeners with sharp-edged questions and insinuations: "Is it really so?" she always asks. "I want to know so much." She also plays the harp reluctantly before Steerforth and David, and, when Steerforth pretends to be touched by her playing ("Come, Rosa, for the future we will love each other very much!"), she strikes him and throws him off "with the fury of a wildcat," and then bursts from the room.¹¹ Towards the end of the novel, she breaks into another violent rage, this time against Little Em'ly, her rival for Steerforth's love.

Rosa's violence is the result of sexual and emotional frustration. She is about thirty years old, and as even David guesses, she wants to be married. On her lip there is a scar, however, the "gift" of Steerforth, who threw a hammer at her when a boy, out of mere exasperation. For David, this scar becomes the sign of mysteries beyond his grasp. When he settles down in his room at night, for instance, he suddenly finds "a likeness of Miss Dartle looking eagerly at [him] from above the chimney-piece":

It was a startling likeness, and necessarily had a startling look. The painter hadn't made the scar, but I made it; and there it was, coming and going — now confined to the upper lip, as I had seen it at dinner, and now showing the whole extent of the wound inflicted by the hammer, as I had seen it when she was passionate.

I wondered peevishly why they couldn't put her anywhere else instead of quartering her on me. To get rid of her, I undressed quickly, extinguished my light, and went to bed. But, as I fell asleep, I could not forget that she was still there looking, "Is it really, though? I want to know;" and when I awoke in the night, I found that I was uneasily asking all sorts of people in my dreams whether it really was or not — without knowing what I meant.¹²

In *Amerika* Kafka seems to solve the puzzle of what David meant. For David's sexual innocence is clearly mixed

with fear and revulsion — and with repellent fascination. Karl Rossmann shows a similar mixture when he resists the frankly sexual invitation of Clara Pollunder, and attempts to escape from her into the darkness of his bedroom. But Clara pursues him there (even as Rosa's likeness pursues David), and then shoves him about in her fury, throwing him down violently onto a sofa, threatening to box his ears, and nearly choking him: " 'Cat, wild cat!' was all that Karl could shout in the confusion of rage and shame which he felt within him. 'You must be crazy, you wild cat!' " ¹³

Later Karl plays the piano, very reluctantly, before Clara, when suddenly Mr. Mack calls to him from a nearby room, where he sits in his nightshirt in the middle of a huge double bed. Mack falsely compliments him on his playing, just as Steerforth fakes the effect of Rosa's music; but Karl is more disturbed by the revelation of illicit love between Mack and Clara — even as David is disturbed by the implications of Rosa's violence. All of which makes Rosa the most likely source for Kafka's sweetheart. It seems relevant, at the least, that she treats David like an innocent child, in conjunction with Steerforth and the mysterious servant Littimer, while Karl is treated like a child by Clara, Mack, and the old servant with the lantern. It was David's sexual innocence, and not his later affair with Dora, which seems to have attracted Kafka. At Steerforth's home he is immersed in sexual violence, and like Karl, he is repelled and fascinated by what he sees. Indeed, the whole nexus of adolescent feeling seems to inform these chapters, since David's great affection for Steerforth, and the effeminate nickname, "Daisy," which Steerforth gives him, only add to the pattern of sexual ambiguity, and set a precedent for Rossmann's adolescent fondness for Mack, Pollunder, and his Uncle Jacob.

It seems plausible, then, that Kafka's note about "die Geliebte auf dem Landgut" includes various portions of Dickens' novel: the first trip to Dora Spenslow's, the charade device which follows, and the scenes at Steerforth's home which are interspersed with all these chapters. This mixture of material is typical of Dickens, who had little control of

the movement of his early novels; but in *Copperfield* there does exist a kind of psychological order, imposed from within by Dickens' unsuspected urgings. With the help of Freudian lights, Kafka was able to improve considerably upon this order: in successive stages, his hero moves through bisexual and oedipal love to sexual maturity. Yet to cite his advantage is not to disparage Dickens, so much as to place him historically, and to give him full credit for psychological depths which are generally denied him. There is no need to agree fully, for example, with Roy Pascal's judgment, that "[Dickens'] books are full of things and persons, surging up and sinking from sight, helping and hindering the hero, yet constituting a world essentially separate from his inward self, only temporarily and accidentally related to it . . . [while] in Kafka . . . each incident is symbolic of the total situation. The outer world is a projection of the inner, and Karl's inner world determines the character of his experiences. Hence the formal unity of Kafka's works, as contrasted with Dickens' 'barbaric senselessness,' as Kafka calls it."¹⁴ In the first place, David's inner world very often determines the character of his experience, in a naïve but powerful way: in his early exclusion from his mother, in his proxy courtship of Nurse Peggotty, in his repellent fascination with Rosa Dartle, and in the later charade with the Spenlows, we have excellent examples of a controlling inward force which Pascal ignores — examples, moreover, which Kafka himself chose to imitate, and which figure forth the very "method" he admired. In the second place, there is some doubt as to whether Kafka could have written *Amerika* without these examples. If he speaks of Dickens' formlessness, he adds at once that he has been able to avoid this fault, thanks to his *weakness* as an artist and *wiser* for his epigonism.¹⁵ And before this, he cites a pattern of incidents which is strongly marked in *Copperfield*, and which gave him a readymade order to work with. After all, if Kafka enjoys an aesthetic advantage, he does so only because Dickens has broken the formal ground before him; and if his psychological perceptions are keener and surer, still, it was Dickens' naïve vision

which enabled him to see with greater clarity. Consider simply all the "country sweetheart" parallels: the common approach to reluctant courtship; the fusion of sexual and economic themes into a single psychic experience; the grotesquely comic quality of the sexual charades; the awareness of adolescent fears and ambiguities; the progression of both heroes towards emotional maturity; and most inclusive of all, the childlike view of a world controlled by harsh parental figures. As Eduard Raban remarks, in "Wedding Preparations in the Country": "a book that I was . . . reading recently taught me more about my little journey than you could imagine."¹⁶ Though the reference is obscure, it seems to apply, with compelling force, to Kafka's reading of *David Copperfield*.

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NOTES

1. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Martin Greenberg and Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1949), p. 188.
2. *Comparative Literature*, VII (Winter 1955), 52-62. Other comparisons of these novels include Rudolf Vasata's "Amerika and Charles Dickens," *The Kafka Problem*, ed. Angel Flores (New York: New Directions, 1946), pp. 134-39; Roy Pascal's "Dickens and Kafka," *The Listener*, April 26, 1956, pp. 504-506; and my own "Amerika: Its Genesis," *Franz Kafka Today*, ed. Angel Flores and Homer Swander (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), pp. 95-116.
3. *Dearest Father*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins (New York: Schocken, 1954), pp. 6-7.
4. *David Copperfield* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 66.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
6. *Amerika*, trans. Edwin Muir (New York: New Directions, 1946), p. 49.
7. *David Copperfield*, p. 55. As this paragraph suggests, Dickens recounts here his own early memories of a childhood Eden with his mother, which was interrupted when his father sent him to work at a blacking warehouse, and all his "early hopes of growing up to be

a learned and distinguished man" were crushed. Now Murdstone suppresses David's drive for learning, as Dickens projects resentment of his father's action into fictional form.

8. See my article, "Kafka's Sources for *The Metamorphosis*," *Comparative Literature*, Fall 1959.

9. This view of Dora and David's mother as childish counterparts is now fairly common. Cf. Jack Lindsay, *Charles Dickens: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: Andrew Dakers, 1950), pp. 289-90; and Gwendolyn B. Needham, "The Undisciplined Heart of David Copperfield," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, IX (September 1954), 89.

10. *David Copperfield*, p. 583.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 457.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 313.

13. *Amerika*, p. 61.

14. Roy Pascal, *op. cit.*, p. 504. For further discussion of these issues, see my essay, "David Copperfield as Psychological Fiction," *The Critical Quarterly*, Winter 1959.

15. *Diaries, 1914-1923*, p. 189.

16. *Dearest Father*, p. 30.

The Seven Paradoxes In Shakespeare's "Hamlet"

Lecture delivered at the course, FREUD AND SHAKESPEARE, arranged by the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, New York, Feb. 14, 1957

by

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For more than three hundred and fifty years, HAMLET has been a staple item in the repertory of the theater in that part of the world influenced by Western thinking. Even a staple item, of course, passes through periods of neglect and revival, and HAMLET has been no exception to this rule. Nevertheless, it has been called — and with some justification — the most famous play in world literature. In a classic, or in other words a venerable and time-honored work, neither fame nor respect automatically ensure real interest. Some people consider an appreciation of the classics a cultural "must"; to admit their boredom would be to betray a cultural lack, and so they keep their lack of interest cautiously to themselves. Others misuse the classics by turning them into an exercise in self-aggrandizement. Happy in the recognition of phrases or even passages made familiar in their school days, they make no attempt to understand the work of art as a whole. The ability to quote phrases — often misapplied, to boot — serves as a satisfactory substitute.

Despite all these unavoidable and rather ludicrous concomitants, HAMLET has moved and impressed millions of spectators. This is not the full extent of its claim to a special niche; in addition it contains a series of paradoxes and — as I hope to show later — a series of brilliant psychological solutions.

To name a few paradoxes:

First, the main psychological problem — Hamlet's motiveless indecision (he gets a commission and delivers an omission) — is not explained by Shakespeare, nor can it be *consciously* understood by the spectator. The paradoxical fact that an incomprehensible play could hold the attention of generations of spectators disturbed generations of scholars — all who worked exclusively on the conscious level. It is true that some admixture of the mysterious-incomprehensible has seldom damaged an author. Andersen's fairy tale of the emperor's new clothes alludes to that human frailty, applicable to all human endeavors. Still, it would be an exaggeration to say that conscious incomprehensibility *alone* makes for success.

The second paradox in HAMLET has not so far even been formulated, to my knowledge: it pertains to the *specificity of Hamlet's conflict with inner conscience*. In general, inner conscience is a restrictive internal "institution" that specializes exclusively in the veto. Its stock in trade consists of the terms, "Don't" and "It is positively forbidden." In those few cases in which inner conscience expresses itself in terms of "Do" and "It is allowed," permission is always granted FOR a disagreeable duty and AGAINST some pleasure. Regardless of whether the restriction is aimed at aggressive or libidinous tendencies, instinctual fantasies and deeds are always hit. No wonder that Mark Twain in THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER called conscience "a misery machine."

Now, the plot of HAMLET exactly reverses this rule: conscience, represented by the ghost of the murdered king, Hamlet's father, directly orders a deed typically forbidden: murder. What does this mean? Isn't it paradoxical that conscience, the forbiddener of the instinctual, should in this case reverse itself?

Of course, one could object that in Hamlet's time the abdication of individual revenge to orderly judicial procedure was not so common as it is today. But it is clear from Hamlet's great popularity among his subjects — a factor repeatedly stressed in the play — that he could have saved himself

the trouble of a personally executed revenge, *provided* he had a case. But did he? He was acting in fulfillment of a ghost's command. Translated into more modern terms, the ghost-scene in HAMLET is comparable to the situation of a man who wakes up one morning and "just knows" that his recently deceased father had been poisoned by the adulterous pair: mother and uncle. Intuition is not a legal argument. Exhumation and the contemporary equivalent of chemical analysis (or even inspection of the body) are never mentioned in the play.

There is another flaw in the argument that justifiable revenge, and even murder (especially among the nobility) were countenanced in Hamlet's day. Respect for law is not the only deterrent. Hamlet's was an era of debout and unquestioning religious belief, and Hamlet, too, was devout. In his first monologue, Hamlet regrets that God forbids suicide. Later in the play, when Hamlet comes upon the king at his devotions, he rationalizes his failure to seize the opportunity of killing him: killed while on his knees in prayer, the uncle-king would automatically have gone to Heaven.

Still, all this but adds to the paradox, for Shakespeare mentions no religious scruples in connection with executing the ghost's command. The mystery deepens, therefore: how can INNER conscience order and condone murder?

The third paradox is the *disproportion between crime and punishment*. Hamlet's crime — and I am anticipating here the explanation offered by Freud in 1899, which will be quoted presently — is one of the banal and unavoidable "heartaches and natural shocks that flesh is heir to" (to quote from Hamlet's great soliloquy) — the child's Oedipal wishes. Every child passes through this phase. To concentrate on boys, those who remain glued to these fantasies must as adults pay the penalty of psychogenically induced potency disturbance, not-too-dangerous depression and dissatisfaction. They are unaware, of course, of the reasons for this. But the penalty of impotence and the penalty of death (as in Hamlet's case) are not quite comparable. Why should so

great an intuitive psychologist as Shakespeare have represented these facts incorrectly?

The players' scenes make it obvious that Hamlet seeks death. His provocations succeed in arousing the king, who then makes three moves which live up to Hamlet's inner expectations: he sends a mission to England bearing letters which order Hamlet's execution; he makes a pact with Laertes to kill Hamlet with a poisoned rapier; he prepares a poisoned drink for Hamlet. Hamlet's unremitting provocations were inwardly intended as pleas that he be killed. This is made clear by the amazing naivete of the reason he gives for arranging of his provocations: the re-enactment of a murder in the play within a play. Allegedly, his purpose is to study the king's facial expression. But in earlier scenes he had lamented the hypocrisy and inscrutability of the king's facial expressions ("That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain" I, Scene 5).

Now, if the disproportion between crime and punishment is so patent in HAMLET, are we confronted with a psychological error made by a psychological genius — *quandumque bonus dormibat Homerus* — or are we dealing with a description which appears to ring false but is actually correct because it covers something more deeply repressed?

The fourth paradox in HAMLET centers around this question: Does Hamlet *indirectly commit suicide* by "provocation and proxy," or is he really killed by Laertes, acting as the instrument of King Claudius? Hamlet is opposed to suicide for two reasons. In his first monologue he regrets that religion prohibits "self-slaughter":

O! that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew;
Or that the everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!

And in his second great monologue ("To be or not to be . . .") he questions whether life after death is any better than life on earth; perhaps it may be worse:

To die, — to sleep: —
To sleep! perchance to dream: — ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. . . .
But that the dread of something after death, —
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, — puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

Nevertheless, at the end of the play Hamlet naively allows himself to be killed. The king has made sure of his death by preparing both a poisoned rapier and a poisoned drink; as soon as Hamlet accepted the silly wager the result became inevitable. Why did Hamlet not suspect the king? Hamlet knew the treacherous contents of the sealed letter to England, and had just told Horatio that this letter decreed his death. And why does Hamlet not prevent his mother from drinking the poisoned drink after the king exclaims, "Gertrude, do not drink!" Hamlet exchanges rapiers with Laertes (thus showing his suspicion), but only *after* he himself had been wounded by the poisoned weapon. So contradictory is Hamlet's pseudo-naivete that Shakespeare feels obliged to explain it beforehand: in preparing the trick with the poisoned rapiers, the king calls Hamlet "most generous and free from all contriving" (IV, Scene VII).

How are we to explain Hamlet's paradoxical naivete?

The fifth paradox is the frequently overlooked fact that *Hamlet disobeys* not only his father's *first command* — to revenge the murder of the father by his wife and brother — but also his *second* — *to leave Queen Gertrude in peace*:

O horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive

Against thy mother aught: leave her to Heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her.

What really happens is that Hamlet furiously attacks his mother in words, and ineffectually and silently plots against the uncle-king in his thoughts when in the company of the alleged malefactor. Moreover, in his cruel "get thee to a nunnery" scene with Ophelia, Hamlet develops an extreme anti-sex philosophy and names woman *the* prime culprit:

. . . Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for
wise men know well enough what monsters you
make of them.

This gives the impression that Hamlet considered man merely the executive organ of woman's plotting cruelty: a theme which does not fit at all into the Oedipal fantasy, where the mother is represented as weak, passive, and completely under the father's dominance.

Paradox No. 6, again, is a frequently neglected factor. Hamlet's *ambivalence* is not limited to his father's command to revenge his murder; it runs like a red thread through many of Hamlet's actions as well. Generalized ambivalence, *per se*, is not unusual in a doubt-torn individual. But in Hamlet, as in many of Shakespeare's characters, ambivalence also works according to the "splitting-off" principle, a point first elaborated on in general terms by Ludwig Jekels, most distinguished and brilliant member of Freud's Old Guard, with whom I had the honor of collaborating in the early thirties. This "duplicated expression of psychic themes" results in the suspicion that Polonius is but a caricaturistically demoted father-image, and Ophelia a demoted mother-image. Cruelty dominates in Hamlet's treatment of these doubles: he kills Polonius and drives Ophelia into psychosis and suicide.

The seventh paradox is the most confusing of them all. In pre-analytic times, a poet's work was considered a dramatization of his conscious experiences or fantasies. Since Freud, this view has been modified; the stress now falls on

unconscious wishes and fantasies. Actually, Hamlet has been adduced as a classical example of the Oedipus complex, and the play has been taken not only as a classical presentation of such a case, but as a starting point for *conclusion regarding the author himself* — whoever the genius was who wrote under the name of Shakespeare. It was pointed out that HAMLET had been written as a reaction to the death of the poet's father; it was also noted that the poet represented his own self in Hamlet, for had not the name of his first-born been Hamnet?

There is only one flaw in this deduction. Shakespeare was a *bisexual*. It is true that he married at an early age; it is also true that he wrote the homosexually tinged sonnets. Oscar Wilde, himself a homosexual, used this fact in writing THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W.H. (Shakespeare had dedicated the sonnets to "Mr. W.H."; the initials are those of a young man mentioned by Shakespeare). And Somerset Maugham, in his essay on El Greco, expressed his doubt that genius and homosexuality can be united in one person, but added: "If it were not for the perplexing sonnets I should say that the homosexual can never reach the supreme heights of genius." The idea that a great poet may be a genius not because of his homosexuality, but despite it, did not occur to the rather biased Somerset Maugham.

Today, we know that homosexuality goes back to vicissitudes antedating the Oedipus complex. Children who acquired an overdose of psychic masochism at a very early age, when the mother was pre-eminent in their lives, subsequently fled from woman as far as possible — to another continent, man. Homosexuals are frantic fugitives from woman, not renouncers or despisers of woman. The male-female role in homosexuals is a half-conscious camouflage of a deeper conflict: the "bad" mother, played by the active variety of homosexual, mistreats the "poor" baby, played by the passive variety. This is at the root of homosexual's hopeless conflicts of jealousy, of their unreliability, of their rapid succession of partners. Therefore, homosexuality is not a way of life, but inner misery on the conveyor belt. I have recently

pointed this out, adducing clinical material, in my book, **HOMOSEXUALITY: DISEASE OF WAY OF LIFE?** (Hill & Wang, New York, 1956).

*

I propose now to attempt to unravel this septet of paradoxes.

Parts of the first paradox — Hamlet's consciously senseless and consciously totally unmotivated indecision — are admirably resolved by Freud in 1899 in a footnote appended to the text of **THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS**. Here are Freud's exact words:

Another of the great creations of tragic poetry, Shakespeare's **HAMLET**, has its root in the same soil as **OEDIPUS REX**. But the changed treatment of the material reveals the whole difference in the mental life of these two widely separated epochs of civilization: the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind. In the **OEDIPUS** of Sophocles the child's underlying wishful fantasy is brought into the open and realized as it would be in a dream. In **HAMLET** it remains repressed, and — just as in the case of a neurosis — we only learn of its existence from its inhibiting consequences. Strangely enough, the overwhelming effect produced by the more modern tragedy has turned out to be compatible with the fact that people have remained completely in the dark as to the hero's character. The play is built up on Hamlet's hesitation over fulfilling the task of revenge that is assigned to him, but its text offers no reason or motives for these hesitations and an immense variety of attempts at interpreting them have failed to produce a result. According to the view which originated with Goethe and is still the prevailing one today, Hamlet represents the type of man whose power of direct action is paralyzed by an excessive development of his intellect. (He is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.") According to another view, the dramatist has tried to portray a pathologically irresolute

character, one which may be classed as neurasthenic. The plot of the drama shows us, however, that Hamlet is far from being represented as a person incapable of taking any action. We see him in action on two occasions: first in a sudden outburst of temper, when he runs his sword through the eavesdropper behind the arras, and secondly in a premeditated and even crafty fashion, when, with all the callousness of a Renaissance prince, he sends the two courtiers to the death that has been planned for himself. What is it, then, that inhibits him in fulfilling the task set to him by his father's ghost? The answer, once more, is that it is the peculiar nature of the task. Hamlet is able to do anything — except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took the father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. Here I have translated into conscious terms what was bound to remain unconscious in Hamlet's mind; and if anyone is inclined to call him a hysteric, I can only accept the fact as one that is implied by my interpretation. The distaste for sexuality expressed by Hamlet in his conversation with Ophelia fits in very well with this: the same distaste which was destined to take possession of the poet's mind more and more during the years that followed, and which reached its extreme expression in *TIMON OF ATHENS*. For it can of course only be the poet's own mind which confronts us in Hamlet. I observe in a book on Shakespeare by Georg Brandes (1896) a statement that *HAMLET* was written immediately after the death of Shakespeare's father (in 1601), that is, under the immediate impact of his bereavement and, as we may assume, while his childhood feelings about his father had been freshly revived. It is known, too, that Shake-

speare's own son who died at an early age bore the name of "Hamnet," which is identical with "Hamlet." Just as HAMLET deals with the relation of a son to his parents, so MACBETH (written at approximately the same period) is concerned with the subject of childlessness. But just as all neurotic symptoms, and, for that matter, dreams are capable of being "interpreted in different layers" ("ueberdeterminiert") and indeed need to be, if they are to be fully understood, so all genuine creative writings are the product of more than a single impulse in the poet's mind, and are open to more than a single interpretation. In what I have written I have only attempted to interpret the deepest layer of impulses in the mind of the creative writer.

In 1919, in a later edition of INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS, Freud added:

The above indications of a psychoanalytic explanation of HAMLET have since been amplified by Ernest Jones and defended against the alternative views put forward in the literature of the subject.

Freud's discovery of the "dynamic unconscious" — which changed a nebulous philosophical concept into a clinically provable, dynamically effective and therapeutically accessible fact — also explained why (to use Freud's words) "the overwhelming effect (of HAMLET) turned out to be compatible with the fact that people have remained completely in the dark as to the hero's character." Since every human being has gone through the Oedipal conflict, communication between the author's unconscious and that of the spectator is established.

Paradox No. 2 — the specificity of Hamlet's conflict with inner conscience — leads into one of the most complex problems of the human psyche: the problem of the "superego." The only excuse I can give for discussing it here is that the interpreter cannot help himself; the blame must fall on

Shakespeare, for having put the problem in the center of the play.

To clear up the matter of semantics first: When people speak of conscience, they allude to a set of conscious precepts, reasonable and accepted rules, which make civilized life possible. Any community that failed to outlaw, for example, murder, rape, incest, stealing, etcetera, would disintegrate. No reasonable person argues with these rules, which are communicated to the child by his elders, and typically accepted via identification.

UNCONSCIOUS conscience is something quite different. It is by no means a prolongation of the long arm of conscious conscience. It is — paradoxically enough — torture for torture's sake.

Originally, Freud spoke of an "inner censor"; in his INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS the latter appears and is partly responsible for the symbolism in dreams. Later, Freud described the "*ego ideal*," a rather benevolent inner department.

This ego ideal is created to ward off constant blows *unavoidably* directed at the child's self-esteem and narcissism during the process of adapting to reality.

At an early age, the child faces a grave problem. Since what he calls "fun" is too often forbidden as "naughtiness" by the rulers of the nursery, he must cope with an unending barrage of "don'ts" made effective by punishment and moral reproach to begin with, and later by guilt. Moreover, these restrictions invade and invalidate the child's most cherished fantasy, his conviction of his own omnipotence. This narcissistic and gratuitous assumption tells him that there are no limits to his power. Now his subjective, megalomaniacal illusion of omnipotence comes into direct conflict with his objective helplessness. Reality, represented by the rulers of the nursery, wins out when the child reaches the age of two or two and a half. But the child takes an oblique path to his defeat. He does not give his upbringers the satisfaction of frankly submitting to their inescapable demands. Instead, he himself, "of his own volition," abstains from for-

bidden actions. Via *unconscious* identification, he absorbs and incorporates the "don'ts," thus presenting to the outside world an ideal picture of a "good boy."

There is an ironic postscript to the creation of the ego ideal. An air of achievement and success surrounds the family. The parents seem to have achieved a major educational triumph; the child seems to have been successful in rescuing some vestiges of the glory which was infantile megalomania. Parents and child alike are ignorant of the inner facts actually involved, but everyone is happy — though for the wrong reasons.

In later years, Freud described the "*superego*" (the term, "*unconscious conscience*," is unprecise), a stern, rather malicious inner department. The latter is by no means a copy of external educational forces, but seems to lead a life of its own. It is simply the undischarged aggression inborn in the child — undischarged because the infant's muscular apparatus is too weak to place aggression outside. The result is that the *superego* treats the ego with the identical cruelty with which the ego would treat objects outside of itself — had it the power to do so. In Freud's own words:

The *superego* seems to have made a one-sided selection, to have chosen only the harshness and severity of the parents, their preventive and punitive function, while their loving care is no taken up and continued by it.

This statement appeared in *NEW INTRODUCTORY LECTURES ON PSYCHOANALYSIS*, 1932, pages 89 and 90. And in *CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS*, on page 100 of the German edition, Freud wrote:

What methods does culture use to inhibit counter-acting aggression, to neutralize the latter, or even to exclude it? . . . This can be studied in the development of the individual. What is done in order to render his lust for aggression harmless? The method is very strange, and at the same time very obvious, although

we did not guess it. *The aggression becomes introjected, internalized*; finally it is returned to its place of origin, hence *directed against the individual's own ego*. There it is absorbed by one particular sector of the ego, the superego, which is counterposed to the other parts of the ego. Now, "*conscience*" exhibits *towards the ego that identical severe readiness to aggression which the ego would have liked to expend on an outside individual*. We call this tension between the severe superego and the subjugated ego "feeling of guilt"; it manifests itself in the need for punishment.

What happened to the ego ideal in Freud's later writings? It disappeared somewhere; it is seldom mentioned. And what connection had been established between the originally benevolent ego ideal, and the rather malicious superego subsequently discovered? None.

This difficulty was pointed out by Jekels and myself in 1933, and we suggested this way out:

The superego has *two* subdepartments. One of these is the *ego ideal*. The other is the "*daimonion*," (a term borrowed from Socrates) which consists of recoiling and inexpressible aggression that becomes self-aggression. In the inner *modus operandi*, daimonion confronts the ego with its self-created ego ideal, and mockingly asks: "Any discrepancy between your self-portrait and reality?" Since the ego ideal also contains all the child's grandiose expectations for the future, and these are always expressed in terms of superlatives, a discrepancy is always obvious. Guilt, depression, dissatisfaction are the result.

The poor ego is caught in its own devices; it is constantly hit with its own stick. Once more, it chooses a desperate remedy. It starts to "love" punishment. This leads to the "pleasure in displeasure" pattern, scientifically known as *psychic masochism*.

The case history of psychic masochism (which is not to be confused with perversion masochism) starts simply enough. Reality forces the child to acknowledge that his fantasy of omnipotence — "infantile megalomania" — is not acceptable

to his elders. Parents believe that in teaching the child adaptation to reality they are dealing with a *tabula rasa*; actually, they are but the instruments of a dual process, for the child is at the same time unlearning an old principle — his concept of omnipotence — and learning a new one — that of reality.

The child is born with a triad of biological endowments: megalomania, aggression, libido.

Infantile megalomania is based on very real experiences of the unborn and newborn child. The unborn child lives for "long eternities," certainly not regulated by the clock, in the womb, pursuing a prenatal existence void of effort, spared even the exertion of eating and breathing, for nutrition and oxygen are channeled directly from the mother's bloodstream into his own. In his first weeks and months of postnatal existence, adults in intuitive wisdom attempt to duplicate prenatal conditions. The infant must of course eat, breathe and eliminate, but he is kept in warmth and darkness, and left undisturbed in his almost constant sleep. When he awakens, warm milk is given him, and his excretions and secretions removed.

We do not know how or by what means the infant builds up his "Weltbild," but we do know by his later reactions that all children reach the same conclusion, that all infants consider themselves omnipotent sorcerers, completely self-sufficient ("autarchic"). The infant, when crossed, reaches a pitch of fury entirely out of proportion to his ability to express it. The child never gives up his fantasy of magical power; forced into a corner at last, he makes compromises. One such compromise has already been mentioned: the construction of the ego ideal for the purpose of avoiding the necessity of admitting that adults have more power to enforce their educational commands than the child has to resist them. The child rescues vestiges of megalomania by glamorizing the "don't's" and identifying with them. "Adults aren't stronger than I am," his reasoning runs, "it's just that I wanted to stop being naughty." Of course, the child's new pattern of behavior does not embody *all* parental "don'ts."

The child's first attempt to rescue remnants of infantile

megalomania precedes his construction of the ego ideal. This earliest device is psychic masochism. When the child is still very young, adults begin to impose rules of conduct; the child resists them, and is forced to obey under penalty of parental admonitions, parental coldness which is viewed as loss of love, or even some kind of punishment. Some children prove amenable, some do not. Those who are not puzzle their parents: how can a child persist in the conduct he knows will lead to, say, a spanking? The parents might be equally puzzled if they knew the answer: the child has invented a new technique of coping with punishment. Every human being, including the candidate for psychic masochism, lives according to the "pleasure principle" — he wants to be happy. What happiness, if any, can be found in courting punishment, moral reproach, guilt? Obviously none. But if the child learns to love punishment, the answer is made visible: *the only pleasure one can extract from displeasure is to make this displeasure a pleasure*. This is what actually happens. By unconsciously "libidinizing" punishment, the usual deterrent undergoes a sea-change and becomes allure.

Two factors reinforce this fantastic solution. First, the daimonion — the cruel inner jailer — contributes more and more to the child's discomfort. This discomfort, too, is partly neutralized by the masochistic "solution." Second, the "pleasure in displeasure" principle, once established (this is called the *germanic* picture in psychic masochism), is rejected by the superego, exactly because of the inner pleasure-gain. (It should be remembered that the function of the superego is entirely punitive.) To show that the superego's objection is unjustified, the poor child is forced to prove that he is not an unconscious lover of punishment, but an innocent victim of other people's malice. I have elaborated on this fact in numerous publications.

This secondary set of defensive alibis — the *clinical* picture in psychic masochism — leads to the following tripartite pattern, which never varies.

First, the psychic masochist provokes a rebuff, a humili-

ating insult, a punitive defeat. This provocation is committed without conscious awareness.

Second, he deplores his defeat, in blessed ignorance of the fact that he himself made it inevitable. Consciously he sees only his opponent's "mean and brutal" reaction. In his version of the incident, the other person has attacked him in an outburst of pure malice and for no reason. Flushed with righteous indignation, he fights back, fully convinced that he is acting justifiably in self-defense ("pseudo-aggression").

Third, he savors his self-provoked defeat (inevitable because his unconscious choice of an adversary makes victory impossible), laments the terrible wrongs done him, and whimpers in self-pity, "What an injustice! This never happens to anyone but me!" The completeness of his absorption in his self-imposed misery prevents him from understanding that he unconsciously enjoys his defeats.

The final result of this triad is: a) defeat, never understood; b) self-pity, never relinquished; c) "injustice collecting" on the conveyor belt.

This "classical picture" in psychic masochism has many subdivisions and gradations. It is not always immediately recognizable in human behavior, but nobody can go through the early infantile situation without acquiring some traces of this scourge. It is universal; no person is without some record of having at some time or other unconsciously "led with his chin" or "asked for it." Isolated instances of this type of reaction should not, of course, lead to the conclusion that an individual is a victim of masochistic regression. But if this attitude becomes the leading pattern in a person's professional and social life, in his sexual and marital relations and in his choice of a hobby, one may justifiably suspect him of psychic masochism.

The connection between infantile megalomania and psychic masochism is this: libiditized self-damage preserves vestiges of megalomania. The masochist reasons, inwardly, "My bad mother (or her successive representatives) believes that she punished me. Nonsense! I, through my provoca-

tion, *made* her punish me!" This leads to predilections for unconsciously self-created defeats. But because the pleasure gain in psychic masochism is unconscious, the totally ignorant conscious self experiences only the suffering which is an inherent part of the bargain.

What has all this to do with HAMLET?

It is my contention that Shakespeare — of course, without conscious awareness — anticipated scientific discoveries on conscience made three centuries after his death. The ghost in HAMLET represents the ego ideal; the torture Hamlet inflicts on himself shows the daimonion at work. We know that human beings can reach relative contentment only on condition that they avoid severe conflicts with the inner conscience. If the ego can prove that it has acted in accordance with precepts embodied in the ego ideal, the discrepancy between ego and ego ideal is eliminated, and therefore cannot be used by Daimonion as "torture material."

Hamlet's ego ideal commands revenge. If Hamlet had obeyed the command, he would have avoided the conflict, since it is laudable to revenge one's father's murder. Exactly at this point, Daimonion makes that solution impossible by pointing out ironically that Hamlet is just as guilty as the murderer, Claudius. Hence Hamlet's hopeless conflict.

So beaten down is Hamlet's ego that he does not even ask the pertinent question: what right does conscience have to demand that he become a murderer, in the first place? Only one hint is included in the play. Hamlet asks Horatio to observe the king's facial expression during the players' performance:

Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy.

The transition from "venerable" ghost to "damned" — soon after, Hamlet reverts again to veneration of the ghost,

e.g., in the bedroom scene with his mother — represents a hopeless attempt to devalue the ego ideal.

At the same time, Hamlet *mercilessly provokes the king*. This is a typical masochistic action, and typically successful. Isn't it strange that it never occurs to Hamlet that no murderer hesitates to commit a *second* murder to conceal the fact that he is guilty of the *first*?

The whole ghost-problem in HAMLET is intimately connected with *intuition*. Hamlet's exclamation, when the ghost tells him of the murder, "O my prophetic soul!", points clearly in the direction of previous subjective and insoluble inner suspicions. As I pointed out in "Diagnosis and Prognosis In Psychotherapy — Versus Predictions, Guesses and Hunches," printed in the *Journal of Clinical Psychopathology* (8:771-784, 1947), and in further elaborations in my book, *PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DAMAGE*, which is now in preparation, intuition never occurs in quiet times. For intuition, this "knowledge above and beyond our intelligence," to appear, the prerequisite is a severe "pseudo-incompetence attack" in which the superego pushes us to the wall, regardless of whether or not the accusation of ignorance is justified. Generally, masochistic depression follows. In exceptional and rare situations, the ego makes a desperate defensive effort by mobilizing its last reserves, and produces a moment of "intelligence beyond our intelligence." Thus an intuitive thought is born.

An intuitive thought may be productive, but is not always so. At times one gathers the impression that the malicious superego, half-condescendingly, permits the perception of knowledge, otherwise hidden, only for the sake of reducing the individual to absurdity: "Now you know. And what do you propose to do with this knowledge?" In short, the superego turns the tables, and uses the wisdom retrieved in the act of intuition as new torture material. This seems to be the case in HAMLET.

These assumptions lead directly to the central problem: *What is Hamlet's real inner crime?* The answer to this question will dispose of a few of the paradoxes enumerated

earlier: the discrepancy between Oedipal fantasies and self-destruction; the reason for and technique of self-destruction; the accusation of woman as the main malefactor; the splitting-off technique in ambivalence.

It seems to me that Hamlet's crime of Oedipal fantasies, so brilliantly elucidated by Freud, is but camouflage obscuring a deeper conflict, antedating the Oedipal one. Let us not overlook the fact that Freud's analytic discoveries were made in the incorrect "geological" order. Freud began by exploring the most superficial layers of the unconscious, and subsequently probed the deeper layers. This is the reverse of the child's actual development, which does not begin on the apex but at the base of the psychic pyramid. In 1931, Freud himself discovered the precursors of the triangular Oedipus complex, the duality mother-child. Freud named this the "pre-Oedipal phase." This earliest phase is characterized by masses of misconceptions, fears, projections. The child imputes all possible sinister designs to the objectively benevolent mother without whose loving care he would die of hunger or exposure. Barricaded behind his unfamiliarity with objective facts, living emotionally on the basis of unreal megalomaniacal and autarchic assumptions, the child projects part of his own inexpressible aggression (the part that is not absorbed by the formation of the superego) on to his innocent mother. The outcome is a severe conflict of ambivalence. Strong fears are counterbalanced by the gradual realization that mother is "also" good. Freud suspected that this painful ambivalence pushes the child into the Oedipal phase. Here, to take the boy as example, the positive emotional part is fastened to the mother, while the negative horn of the dilemma is placed on the "bad" competitor — the father.

My own opinion is that the process does not stop there. The Oedipus complex represents a "rescue station" from unbearable fears centered around the *pre-Oedipal* mother. By borrowing strength from his identification with the father, the boy — in an active repetition of a passively endured experience — reverses the roles completely. He now sees in his mother an *image of his own helpless self*, thus making the

father (in identification with him, as well) into the "torturer." This in turn leads only to further fears of retaliation ("castration fear"). After a few short years of attempting to cope with fears to end all fears, the Oedipal fantasy, too, collapses when the child is four or five. As a result, the attachment to the mother becomes desexualized into filial affection. Aggression is eliminated from the relationship with the father, leaving comradeship and "being a pal." I have elaborated on these mechanisms in *THE BASIC NEUROSIS* (1949).

In this earliest level of development — the pre-Oedipal phase — the child lays the foundation of the most dangerous of all "defense mechanisms" — psychic masochism, upon which I have already elaborated.

These considerations explain some of the paradoxes of *HAMLET*. We can understand now why Hamlet sees in woman the main malefactor; one of his first reactions to the ghost's revelation is the exclamation: "O most pernicious woman!" Perhaps we have to adduce another quotation from Shakespeare: in *TWELFTH NIGHT* (I, V, line 259) we find the words: "Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive." It may be that even the official version of the murder of Hamlet's father is thus explainable; allegedly he is bitten by a snake while sleeping. The snake of Paradise fame is emotionally associated with Eve's daughters.

It is quite possible that Shakespeare's tendency to see woman as "the great enemy" also accounted for his cool attitude towards Queen Elizabeth. Georg Brandes, in his Shakespeare biography (page 41), remarked, "Shakespeare was the only poet of the period who absolutely refused to comply with the Queen's demand for incessant homage." Jekels pointed out how different was Shakespeare's attitude towards Elizabeth's successor, James I, son of Mary Stuart, whom Elizabeth had executed. Some scholars (including Jekels) also believed that *MACBETH* represents an apotheosis of James upon his succession to the throne: In this tragedy, Malcolm, son of the murdered King Duncan, finally becomes king. Once more, Lady Macbeth, the instigator, is thwarted.

If, as assumed, undigested masochistic attachment to the mother image is the core of Hamlet's "crime," many of his pseudo-naïve actions are seen as purposeful. Unconsciously bent on suicide by provocation and proxy — a not infrequent occurrence in direct and indirect forms in these deeply regressed neurotics — he provokes the king, and the king acts the part assigned to him. Hamlet's aggression (in the split-off figures) is pseudo-aggression. The so exaggeratedly pronounced Oedipal conflict, though also repressed, has the purpose of disguising the real problem. It is a highly successful camouflage, as the extensive literature proves.

As is to be expected, Shakespeare clung on the *conscious* level to the usual pseudo-aggressive defense. Hamlet's inhibited revenge fantasies (in reality, pseudo-aggressive) are taken at face value. This is visible in Hamlet's other double, Fortinbras. The late Ella F. Sharpe, a British colleague, brought this point out:

Fortinbras had a father killed by King Hamlet (Hamlet's father). However, he does not succeed to the throne of Norway but remains in tutelage to an old uncle, harboring his resentment against King Hamlet's successor, Claudius. Thus Hamlet and Fortinbras are in the same relationship to Claudius. Fortinbras gathers up "in the skirts of Norway" (Act I, Sc. 1) a set of wild unruly youth to make war on Claudius. . . . It is to repel young Fortinbras that the war-like preparations are made and the close watch kept at the beginning of the play. But when, at Claudius' request, the old uncle rebukes Fortinbras, the latter obediently gives up his plan to avenge his father's death and asks instead only for a quest of honor elsewhere. It is only honor he covets. It is this valiant but obedient young man, *who has given up his thirst for revenge*, who returns in the final scene, when the orgy of death is over, to hear that Hamlet has named him as his successor. Fortinbras, the Knight sans peur et sans reproche, ascends without bloodshed to the throne of Denmark,

as soon as the wicked king and queen and the *revengeful** Hamlet have been disposed of by no deed of his (p. 256, my italics).**

No, Hamlet was not revengeful; he was but a depressed fugitive from a hopeless conflict of conscience. What appears as revengefulness is but pseudo-aggression covering the more deeply repressed masochistic infantile solution of his inner conflict.

Finally, we arrive at the last and most puzzling paradox: the charting of Shakespeare's inner psychic makeup on the basis of conclusions drawn from HAMLET.

In my clinical studies on writers — thirty-six clinical analyses are reported in my book, *THE WRITER AND PSYCHOANALYSIS*, first published in 1950, and that number has by now more than doubled — I pointed out that a writer is a chronic defendant standing before the tribunal of his inner conscience. His work of art represents his sublimatory defense. However, he never admits to his real wishes, but only to secondary defenses — meaning the defense against the defense — against these wishes. The writer admits to the *lesser* intrapsychic crime to cover up and deny the *greater* intrapsychic crime.

To adduce an example:

In one of his unpublished novels, a French writer, a patient, described a man who, after breaking off a relation with a girl, wonders about the reasons. He cannot blame the girl; he just feels suddenly that he is "through" with her. No feeling is left, just a great emptiness, indifference, and the conviction that he must leave the girl. In a flash of insight,

* Hamlet's guilt because of aggressive fantasies had been connected by some analytic writers with his suicidal self-destruction, and especially his fight against that tendency. What is missing in this deduction is the masochistic basis. For elaboration, see the author's "Problems of Suicide," *The Psychiatric Quarterly Supplement* 20: 261-275, 1946.

** COLLECTED PAPERS ON PSYCHOANALYSIS. The Hogarth Press, London, 1950. Miss Sharpe attempted an analysis of Hamlet from M. Klein's viewpoint.

the man understands that he is incapable of real love. The next instant, however, he represses his understanding and begins pursuing another woman. The reader is left with the impression that the neurotic hero will endlessly repeat the same pattern of falling in pseudo-love, being disappointed without obvious reason, and so forth.

During the preparation of that novel my patient found himself faced with the following conflict: His wife, the victim of a chronic incurable malady, had just suffered a new relapse. Although he desired to leave her, he found this plan unacceptable under the tragic circumstances. The marital conflict, however, was in no way connected with his wife's relapses, since the family doctor had informed him, on behalf of his wife's family and before the marriage, of the girl's illness. The patient showed me the entry in his diary on the day on which the discussion with the physician took place. It reported the facts and the patient's decision: "I decided to gamble with destiny." This wish to overtrump destiny was a masochistic action of the patient's unconscious and had exactly the results inwardly intended: Every time his wife had to enter a sanitarium for some months — and this happened with regularity — he complained bitterly about the injustice she had done him. That he unconsciously provoked the whole situation by marrying her was, of course, not conscious to the patient. This complaining about self-created ill luck was supplemented by self-commiseration.

As can be imagined, the patient did not understand his real conflict. He believed that he stuck to his wife *despite* the suffering she inflicted on him. In unconscious reality, he was sticking to her *because* of this unconsciously self-created and inwardly sought-for unhappiness. Psychic masochists love this type of situation.

The hero in the patient's novel leaves a woman without any reason. This is exactly the patient's alibi: "If there are men who leave their wives without adequate reasons, I certainly can do it, for I have every justification."

Hence the neurotic hero of the story played the part of *appeaser of my patient's conscience*. This also explains why

a less important part of his neurosis — his inability to love — is permitted to become conscious, although typically repressed. Actually the patient's main conflict is induced by the opposite wish, which was to remain with his wife despite all logical reasons to the contrary, because she gratified his neurotic-masochistic tendencies. His conflict appears to be an aggressive one — to leave or not to leave his wife — and against this reproach of conscience, defenses and alibis are produced. However, the pseudo-aggressive conflict covers the dynamically decisive one — the masochistic wish to suffer. Similarly, the guilt is shifted from the masochistic to the pseudo-aggressive problem. The "*lesser* intropsychic crime" is accepted to cover up the "*greater* inner crime."

Another subterfuge can be noted, namely, the flash of insight which shows him that he is incapable of love, hence neurotically ill. The fact that no explanation is given for his inability to love is significant. It denotes an alibi too. The inexplicable means for the patient: "Neurosis is not under conscious volition, hence I cannot be held responsible."

Freudian psychoanalysis was originally interested in literature for a comparatively selfish reason — to prove its own point. Attacked again and again by so-called practical people as nonsensical and fantastic, our science has defended itself by various means: for instance, by pointing out the result of repressions and resistances making up the wasteland of the minds of the "practical" fools. An unimportant argument against the self-righteousness of the "practical realists" was that great writers have known intuitively everything that psychoanalysis has discovered and proved scientifically. Therefore the writer's intuitive knowledge has been adduced in argument pro analysis in hundreds of psychoanalytic papers.

I am quoting from a lecture delivered before the New York Psychoanalytic Society on January 27, 1942, later published in *The Psychoanalytic Review* (31:40-70, 1944):

From an historical point of view, it is interesting to note that even the most complete of psychological

doctrines, psychoanalysis, has to a certain extent been taken in by the artist. The original analytic formulation on this subject ran as follows: The artist expresses in his work his UNCONSCIOUS fantasies. This was a great improvement on the one previously accepted by the world in general, which assumed that the work represented his CONSCIOUS wishes and experiences in modified form. Despite this, our increased understanding of the artistic personality was only relative. We still failed to distinguish between the unconscious wish and the unconscious mechanism of defense against this wish. My explanation for this is that very few *artists* were analyzed, and consequently early analytic assumptions were based upon the interpretations of the *work* of artists already dead. Analysis, in the first three decades of its existence, was struggling for a recognition of the Oedipus complex. It was indeed gratifying then to be able to point to the work and statements of great artists, which seemed to corroborate our findings.

To approach this in another way, let us consider Freud's well-known remarks about HAMLET. (Freud's statement, quoted verbatim to you at the beginning of this lecture, was quoted at this point.) It is truly an astounding and impressive explanation of Hamlet's character, but not a proof that Shakespeare was suffering from an unresolved Oedipus conflict at the time the tragedy was written. It could just as well have been, as has been evidenced in clinical material, that this problem originated as a means of defense against a more deeply imbedded conflict. This erroneous assumption, however, is the foundation for many analytic biographies. (The subtitle of this paragraph in my original paper was "Fallacy of Approach by Analogy.")

I was very glad to see that so prominent a colleague as

Ernest Jones, now widely known as Freud's biographer, indirectly confirmed my opinions six years after I delivered that lecture, when in 1948 he wrote, in "The Death of Ham-

let's Father," published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (29:174-176, 1949) the following words:

The theme of homosexuality does not surprise us in Shakespeare. . . I have argued (in *HAMLET AND OEDIPUS, a book published in 1949*) that Shakespeare wrote HAMLET as a more or less successful abreaction of his intolerable emotions aroused by the painful situation he depicts in his Sonnets, his betrayal by both his beloved young noble and his mistress. (This passage appears on page 175.)
his beloved young noble and his mistress.

This passage appears on page 175.

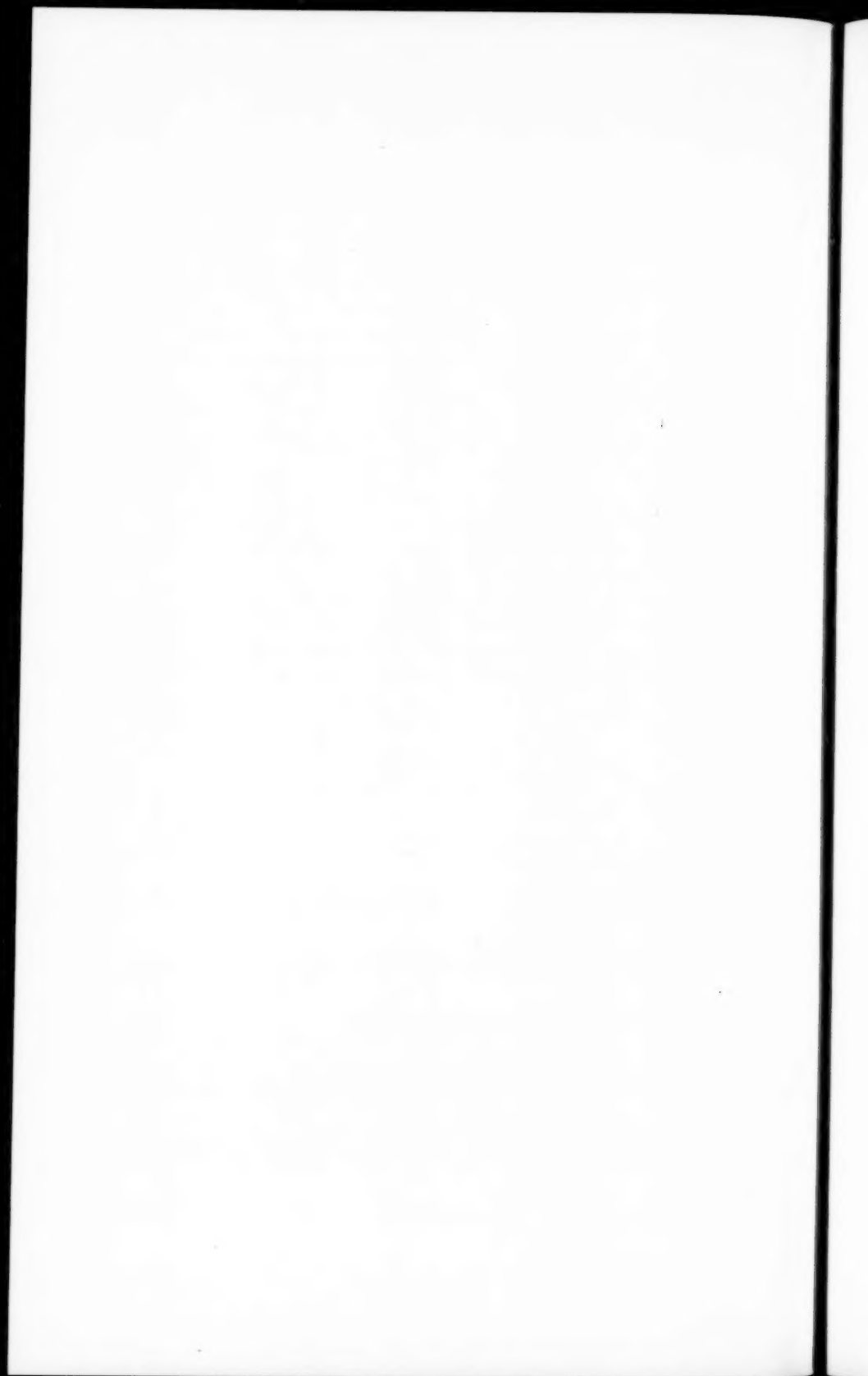
That Shakespeare himself saw male homosexuality only in terms of femininity is one of the poet's rationalizations (for example, the queen in HAMLET compares her son with a "female dove.") The same holds true of Shakespeare's misunderstanding of the reasons for his mistress' betrayal of him, so eloquently and whiningly described in the Sonnets. He blames her more violently than the young man. Quite justifiably, Ernest Jones suspected (1949, l.c.) that Mary Fitton, the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, was unconsciously and indirectly induced to interest herself in W.H. (William Herbert, who later became Earl of Pembroke) by Shakespeare himself, perhaps by "boring her with praise of his beloved handsome youth." Jones concludes: "According to the Sonnets it was *she* who led young Herbert astray. . . I venture to express the surmise that Shakespeare played an active part in bringing about the misfortune that then so deeply affected him" (pages 116-117). This accords well with the thesis — already discussed in this lecture — that Hamlet considered his mother the chief malefactor.

We ask of a writer *psychologically correct* actions on the part of his dramatis personae, arrived at intuitively, and *not* conscious knowledge of these unconscious interconnections. Even the greatest writers have their conscious naivetes and rationalizations — they are as other mortals are.

Seldom in world literature has the accolade of fame been bestowed with more justification than in the case of the poet who wrote HAMLET. What Goethe said of him is still partly true: "Whatever can be known of the heart of man may be found in Shakespeare's plays." Had Goethe said "*intuitively* known," he would have come nearer the truth. It required another genius — a psychological genius — to bring the intuitively and vaguely understood to the stratum of conscious awareness. That was Freud's contribution. Although some modifications are required to bring Freud's opinions on HAMLET, expressed in 1899, to the level of today's knowledge, and although in my opinion the most important facts in HAMLET — the intuitive understanding of a masochistically provocative candidate for suicide and his submissive relationship to the inner conscience — remain unmentioned in the famous footnote, the fact remains that Freud's analysis of Hamlet's superficial layer of unconscious defenses represents a unique bull's-eye, and one which opened a new era in analytic literary criticism. It is remarkable how the psychological genius met the poetic genius halfway.

*

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Walt Whitman: Lover and Comrade

by

Paul Lauter

Walt Whitman's relations with his reader were both personal and didactic: he wished to invite comradeship and also to inculcate certain precepts. Revelation of hard-won personal insight and assertion of moral and metaphysical "truths" intersect to provide Whitman's poetry with its distinctive quality. It would therefore seriously distort Whitman to view his work solely as the product of either motive; however, it is useful to distinguish and to explore the psychological and programmatic impulses and their connections, if for no other reason than to clear the ground for an integrated reading of *Leaves of Grass*. The primary purpose of this paper is to organize the rich background material—for clarification of Whitman's relations with and attitudes toward real men and women, and as a kind of prologue to a study of the imaginative comradeship he established with the readers of his book.

I

Whitman idealized women as madonnas, pure and wise beyond the ken of men, but from earliest childhood he was terribly insecure in the presence of girls. George Whitman commented on Walt's youth: "... I am confident I never knew Walt to fall in love with young girls or even to show them marked attention. He did not seem to affect the girls."¹ Shyness toward women, originating partly in his feeling that social situations inevitably implied "sex," precluded any lasting heterosexual relationship. Brought up among lower-class working people, Whitman was further inhibited by his ignorance of "polite" society, from which he was excluded until after he had achieved a type of fame. For these reasons he never "fit" into the mixed-company draw-

ing-room, always preferring the men's smoker,² or, if forced to join "society," adopting the pose he himself pathetically described:

You ought to be here with me a day or so—(likely one day would be enough *for you*, as there is no city excitement or fashions—no sogering & no balls or theatres—but quite a lot of *gals*, & some real nice ones—I take an old man's liberty of *kissing them all* (especially the handsome ones) when I go around where they are—³

Whitman could, as Professor G. W. Allen has pointed out, hold up his end in conversation—but only in small groups of intimate friends.⁴ Whitman's letters to Peter Doyle, a man whose opinions he knew were close to his own, make apparent his ill-defined sense of social inferiority and permit us to understand the often crude over-compensation of the "free old hawk."⁵

I talked too, indeed went like a house afire. It was good exercise—for the fun of the thing. I also made love to the women, and flatter myself that I created at least one impression—wretch and gay deceiver that I am. The truth is Peter, that I am here at the present time mainly in the midst of female women, some of them young and jolly, and meet them most every evening in company, and the way in which this aged party comes up to scratch and cuts out the youthful parties and fills their hearts with envy is absolutely a caution. You would be astonished, my son, to see the brass and coolness and the capacity of flirtation and carrying on with the girls—I would never have believed it of myself. Brought here by destiny, surrounded in this way and, as I in self defense would modestly state, sought for, seized upon and ravenously devoured by these creatures—and so nice and smart some of them are, and handsome too—there is nothing left for me, is there, but to go in. Of course, young man, you understand it is all on the square. My going in amounts to just talking and joking and having a devil of a jolly time carrying on—that's all. They are all as good girls as ever lived.⁶

The bluff exaggeration, the self-doubt, the quick apology for implying sexual contacts, the obvious inexperience and naivety are all perfectly typical of Whitman.

Although he could not cope with women, Whitman continued to believe them the more perfect sex: "Charley I think sometimes to be a woman is greater than to be a man—is more eligible to greatness, not the ostensible article, but

the real one."⁷ This persistent view springs from a deep reservoir of typically Victorian sentimentality:

We know that humanity is by no means perfect—even the "better half" of humanity. But if goodness, charity, faith, and love reside not in the breasts of females, they reside not on earth. The man who attacks the good name of "the sex," attacks the last resort of the finer virtues which adorn his nature. Retired from the stern conflicts of the world—from the chaffering, grosser strife—women seem to be selected by Providence, as the depositories of the germs of the truest Truth and the fairest Beautiful. In their souls is preserved the ark of the covenant of purity.⁸

Indeed, Whitman's woman is so extraordinary that she will assume all the functions usually reserved for man beside retaining her own divine duties: "A woman is to be able to ride, swim, run, resist, advance, [re?]fuse, shoot, defend herself, sail a boat, hunt, rebel,—just as much as a man."⁹ In his insistence upon woman's equality Whitman reaches the pitch of fervor to say nothing of the heights of bombast, usually reserved by feminists for themselves: "Why should there be these modesties and prohibitions keeps [sic] women from strong actual life—from going about there with men."¹⁰

He was not satisfied, however, with American femininity; even the frontier women, in whom he placed his hopes, could not fit his requirements:

I am not so well satisfied with what I see of the women of the prairie cities. . . . The ladies . . . are all fashionably drest, and have the look of "gentility" in face, manner and action, but they do *not* have, either in physique or the mentality appropriate to them, any high native originality of spirit or body, (as the men certainly have, appropriate to them.)¹¹

Whitman's ideal would have to emulate his paternal great grandmother, his paragon of womanhood:

Sarah White, my great grandmother Whitman, lived to be 90 years old,—she was a large, strong woman, chewed tobacco, opium &c . . . She would sit with her feet up before the fire, just like a man—was every way decided and masculine in her behavior.¹²

She smoked tobacco, rode on horseback like a man, managed the most vicious horse, and, becoming a widow in later life, went forth every day over her farm-lands, frequently in the saddle, directing the labor of her slaves, with language in which, on exciting occasions, oaths were not spared.¹³

But such a woman is little more than a man who has mysteriously acquired the ability to bear children. Thus Whitman's ideal evolves from his desire to reduce as far as possible the barrier between the sexes,¹⁴ the barrier which so continuously troubled him.

Maintaining such an impossible standard, and burdened by his fear of sexuality, Whitman could hardly have been expected to find the perfect mate for himself. Invariably he turned to the one female on whom he could depend, with whom he could feel secure, for as he loved to relate, " . . . George like me is the son of my mother." ¹⁵ Whitman was indeed close to his mother: " 'We have been great chums; always next to each other.' " ¹⁶ Until she died he wrote to her at least once or twice a week whenever he was away from home, her home. Their letters are gossipy and intimate, discussing people's health, the vegetables he eats, his new shirts, her household difficulties, mutual friends (mostly older, motherly women).¹⁷ In an early story Whitman makes much of his hero's correspondence with his mother, announcing that "strange as it may seem to most men, she was also his confidential friend."¹⁸ His eternal dream was to build a small shanty in which he and she could peacefully live out their lives together. Mrs. Whitman seems always to have provided warmth and sympathy for Walt, a sense of contact and belongingness. In the intense depression subsequent to his paralysis she remained a rare spark of happiness:

I have tacked your picture up on the wall at the foot of the bed—the one I like—it looks as natural as can be—and is quite company for me—as I am alone a good deal. . . . ¹⁹

In Whitman's early stories the mother is invariably a sweet, put-upon woman, who strives to protect her son from the injustices of an unfriendly world.²⁰

Louisa Whitman thus provided the pattern for all mothers; other mothers, in turn, served Whitman as substitutes for his own beloved. "He delighted in the company of old fashioned women; mothers of large families preferred. . . ." ²¹ Whitman sought out motherly women like Abby Price for comfort and warmth, to them he could write

and talk about his little daily chores and annoyances, obtaining in return the affection and assurances of maternal love he required. Whitman's need for maternal love also induced him to glorify the mother:

Mothers always make a special appeal to W. "I know of nothing more beautiful, inspiring, significant: a hale old woman, full of cheer as of years, who has raised a brood of hearty children. . . ." ²²

Of the angelic sex, mothers are the Thrones, Powers, and Dominions: "Mothers precede all. Put in a poem the sentiment of women (mothers) as preceding all the rest. ? Let this lead the poem of women." ²³ As an individual led him to the group, so the group leads him to the abstraction—motherhood, the crowning achievement of woman: " 'The best part of any man is his mother. . . . But any mother of any baby has a right to be proud.' " ²⁴ The overwhelming force of this mother-love produces a kind of superficial mother-cult:

Behold a woman!

She looks out from her quaker cap, her face is clearer and more beautiful than the sky.

She sits in an armchair under the shaded porch of the farmhouse, The sun just shines on her old white head. . . .

The melodious character of the earth,

The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go and does not wish to go,

The justified mother of men. ²⁵

This passionate attachment to the mother Whitman elsewhere transmuted into much more effective images of the sea. But while in poems like "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" a poetic asset, his devotion proved a social liability, for it was still another element inhibiting normal relations with women.

Whitman seems, in fact, to have attempted to establish some type of alliance from time to time during his life; but all attempts, if they really developed, were unsatisfying and transient. The information we have about his love life is scattered, fragmentary, and contradictory. For example, a

certain "Ellen Eyre" is purported to have written the following to Whitman on March 25, 1862.

I fear you took me last night for a female privateer. It is time I was sailing under my true colors,—but then today I assume you cared nothing piratical though I would have joyfully made your heart a captive. . . . I trust you will think well enough of me soon to renew the pleasure you afforded me last p.m. and I therefore write to remind you that this is a sensible head as well as a sympathetic heart, both of which would gladly evolve with warmth for your diversion and comfort. You have already my whereabouts and hours. It shall only depend on you to make them yours and me the happiest of women.²⁶

While "Ellen Eyre" seems to have existed—"Frank Sweeney . . . (is the one I told the whole story to about Ellen Eyre)"²⁷—the original of the letter has never been found. Moreover, the "affair," if such indeed it was, must have ended almost as it began, for the unanimous testimony of Whitman's Washington and New York friends was that he was never "bothered up by a woman."²⁸ Other similarly mysterious amours—Will Wallace's "frenchy,"²⁹ the girl whose story Whitman never quite tells Traubel,³⁰ the imaginary southern belle—crop up from time to time, but the conflicting evidence indicates only rare attempts and invariable failures. Whitman's "love affairs" have been exaggerated by sentimentalist critics who wish to find a broken heart behind every poem, and excessively minimized by some psychological analysts who wish to establish his homosexuality. But the very ambiguity and obviously attenuated nature of any relationships verify only Whitman's wish to establish some sort of tie with a woman and his inability to do so on any full and permanent basis.

In spite of this failing, or perhaps because of it, Whitman considered marriage the ideal refuge for a lonesome spirit: ". . . Whitman upheld the modern theory of marriage as being the ideal relationship between sexes."³¹ Thus in real life he would not abide "free love"³²—relations with women were difficult enough, but relations without the comforting sanction of marriage were unthinkable. Besides, marriage offered particularly attractive prospects:

Whatever may be the care and mishaps of married life, it is probably undeniable that "if there's bliss to be found on earth," (a questionable find!) it must be in the domestic circle. . . . How many blissful hours must be spent by fathers, in the blessedness of mere *presence* of affectionate children! How much of happiness is going on—(a cheerful thought that almost cancels the sad evidence of misery we see towering on every side!)—that is dreamed of by no mortal mind—seen by no mortal eye—except the few participants in it³³

Those who do not marry "at best live single and imperfect lives, losing the healthy, beautifying power which God intended them to find in the family relations, isolated units in a world whose essence is association."³⁴ And Whitman recognized himself as one of those "isolated units," although he hid behind the generalized "authors":

Of all the calamities of authors—of all the infelicities of genius—it strikes us that their domestic difficulties are the worst. Take all else from a man and leave him a good and faithful wife and he can never be called unhappy no matter what may be the fluctuations of fortune. But take that comfort, consolation and safeguard away and he becomes "poor" indeed—a vessel without a rudder, beaten here and there, at the mercy of the wind and waves.³⁵

Despite his loneliness, despite the bliss which he thought marriage afforded, Whitman remained a bachelor, sometimes fighting hard to continue single. Each time the possibility of marriage arose, his fear of intimacy with women overcame his expressed program and very probable desire. The heaviest seige laid against his bachelorship was that of Anne Gilchrist, a refined, educated, upper-class Englishwoman whom Rossetti had introduced to *Leaves of Grass* in 1869. Mrs. Gilchrist, like a number of other women, loved with an undisguised passion the virile, athletic poet she discovered in *Leaves*. Assuming equivalence of Whitman and his eidolon, she wrote to him in the same spirit she found in the poems:

In May, 1869, came the voice over the Atlantic to me—O, the voice of my Mate: it must be so—my love rises up out of the very depths of the grief & tramples upon despair. I can wait—any time, a lifetime, many lifetimes—I can suffer, I can dare, I can learn, grow, toil, but nothing in life or death can tear out of my heart the passionate belief that one day I shall hear that voice say to me, "My Mate. The one I so much want. Bride,

Wife, indissoluble eternal!" It is not happiness I plead with God for—it is the very life of my Soul, my love is its life, Dear Walt. It is a sweet & precious thing, this love; it clings so close, so close to the Soul and Body, all so tenderly dear, so beautiful, so sacred; it yearns with such passion to soothe and comfort & fill thee with sweet tender joy; it aspires as grandly, as gloriously as thy own soul. Strong to soar—soft & tender to nestle and caress. If God were to say to me, "See—he that you love you shall not be given to in this life—he is going to set sail on the unknown sea—will you go with him?" never yet has bride sprung into her husband's arms with the joy with which I would take thy hand & spring from the shore.³⁶

A month later she wrote: "I am yet young enough to bear thee children, my darling."³⁷

Whitman must have been flattered by the homage offered him, and titillated by the boost to his manly ego. But as pleased as parts of the letters may have made him, the suggestion of permanent ties, responsibilities, and worst, social and sexual intercourse, horrified him. As much as he would have liked to believe he was the man Mrs. Gilchrist thought him, he could not; he immediately recognized that the situation could end only pathetically. At first he hoped that by not writing, by closing his eyes to the siren, she might go away. But Mrs. Gilchrist persisted, and her second letter apparently convinced Whitman that he would have to face the threat. Thus on November 3, 1871 he replied in a letter which pathetically reveals his inability to share, and perhaps even to appreciate, the nature and the depths of Mrs. Gilchrist's passion:

I wish to give it [writing to her] a day, a sort of Sabbath, or holy day, apart to itself, under serene and propitious influences, confident that I could then write you a letter which would do you good, and me too. But I must at least show without further delay that I am not insensible to your love. I too send you my love. And do you feel no disappointment because I now write so briefly. My book is my best letter, my response, my truest explanation of all. In it I have put my body and spirit. You understand this better and fuller than anyone else. And I too fully and clearly understand the loving letter that it evoked. Enough that there surely exists so beautiful and delicate a relation, accepted by both of us with joy.³⁸

Mrs. Gilchrist, however, could not recognize that the

"mate" of the poems did not exist, and she continued to implore Whitman to call her to him. But the "mate," growing desperate, and hoping to reorient the friendship on a less personal level, replied:

DEAR FRIEND

Your late letter has just reached me—& I write at once to at least say specifically that both your letter of Sept. 6 and that of Oct. 15 safely reached me—this that comes today being the third.

Again I will say that I am sure I appreciate & accept your letters, & all they stand for, as fully as even you, dear friend, could wish—& as lovingly & *bona fide*.³⁹

And thus the correspondence dragged on, Mrs. Gilchrist writing animated, passionate love letters, and Whitman replying only rarely, and then with the impersonal notes that became his trademark. When she finally came to the United States, despite his desperate efforts to head her off, she was, inevitably, disappointed. She found her Walt a sick, shy old man, who was not and never could have been the phallic wonder of the poems.

In spurning Mrs. Gilchrist (and her attempt must stand for the others), Whitman denied many of the principles he had affirmed for his program, for he rejected a healthy mother of three, a potential wife and companion, and above all the sexual fulfillment he insisted upon. But it was not unusual for Whitman to fear and repudiate in personal life what he emphasized so strongly in theory, for "program" served frequently to compensate for shortcomings of personality—even if we were ignorant of Whitman's difficulties with women, we might suspect his virility because of the very way in which, even outside "program" poems, he overemphasized it. Moreover, Whitman's "program" was by no means necessarily a program for Whitman (though in later life he began to assume it was). He himself hardly recognized that the "Children of Adam" poems were, in their ritualistic, mechanical, and abstract way, love bleats. When they were reacted to in kind, he became confused and unresponsive. Receiving the following letter, he had scrawled "? insane asylum" across the envelope:

. . . Know Walt Whitman that thou hast a child for me! [Just what Whitman had been claiming] A noble perfect manchild. I charge you my love not to give it to another woman. The world demands it! It is not for you and me, is *our child*, but for the world. My womb is clean and pure. It is ready for thy child my love. Angels guard the vestibule until thou comest to deposit our and the world's precious treasure. Then oh! how lovingly will I cherish and guard it, our child my love. Thine the pleasure my love. Mine the sweet burden and pain. Mine the sacrifice. Mine to have the stinging rebuke, the shame, I am willing. My motives are pure and holy. Our boy my love! Do you not already love him? He must be begotten on a mountain top, in the open air. Not in *lust*, not in mere gratification of sensual passion, but in holy ennobling pure strong deep glorious passionate broad universal love. I charge you to prepare my love.

I love you, I love you, come, come, Write.⁴⁰

I said to W.: "Why did you write '? insane asylum' there?" He asked: "Isn't it crazy?" "No: it's *Leaves of Grass*." "What do you mean?" "Why—it sounds like somebody who's taking you at your word." He said: "I've had more than one notion of the letter: I suppose the fact that certain things are unexpected, unusual, makes it hard to get them in their proper perspective: the process of adjustment is a severe one." I said: "You should have been the last man in the world to write 'insane' on that envelope." Then I added: "But the question mark saves you You might as well have written 'insane' across *Children of Adam* and the *Song of Myself*." He said: "Many people do." "Yes," I replied: "they do—but you don't." He assented by a nod of his head: "I suppose you are right."⁴¹

Whitman recognized the force of sexual drives, even if he did not (or could not) accede to them: "There are certain propensities and passions inherent in our nature which will have vent in one shape or another, despite all the combined legislative wisdom of communities."⁴² This was not detached, scientific observation, but was based upon his experiences with his own highly sexed nature. Sex, in fact, became central in Whitman's apprehension of life:

"I look at the girls—at the childless women—at the old maids, as you speak of them: they lack something: they are not completed: something yet remains undone. They are not quite full—not quite entire: the woman who has denied the best of herself—the woman who has discredited the animal want, the

eager physical hunger, the wish of that which though we will not allow it to be freely spoken of is still the basis of all that makes life worth while and advances the horizon of discovery. Sex: sex: sex: whether you sing or make a machine, or go to the North Pole, or love your mother, or build a house, or black shoes, or anything—anything at all—it's sex, sex, sex: sex is root of it all: sex—the coming together of men and women: sex: sex."⁴³

Such carnal incantation vibrates somewhere between mysticism and fustian, the poles of his sexual poems.⁴⁴

On a deeply personal level this crucial bodily function becomes the source of mystical experience. Klaus Mann and Schyberg both point out that in his private life Whitman's "eroticism merges with his religious emotion"⁴⁵ in a way not unusual among mystics: ". . . sensual enchantment is transformed into metaphysical divination: the delirium of the mortal flesh mysteriously contains and guarantees the immortality of the soul."⁴⁶ A sexual experience (albeit autoerotic) precipitates the central mystical revelation of "Song of Myself":

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd
over upon me,
And parted my shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your
tongue to my bare-stript heart,
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held
my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge
that pass all the argument of the earth,
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the
women my sisters and lovers,
And that a kelson of the creation is love, . . .⁴⁷

More theoretically, Whitman rejected, on the one hand, repression, which led to "disease and depletion," "morbidity," "inefficient maturity," and "snickering pruriency"; and, on the other, the "sexual Voluptuousness" of wit.⁴⁸ He celebrated neither the forbidden nor the sentimental. Taboos are silly, sensuality disgusting; the only proper attitude is open and hygienic,⁴⁹ for procreation is the end of sex, pro-

creation by which man attain the divine function of creativity. Whitman shows little interest in sentimental literature,⁵⁰ but is fascinated by Lucretius' book (IV) on love, particularly with his detailing of the best positions for conception.⁵¹

"The time will come when the whole affair of sex—copulation, reproduction—will be treated with the respect to which it is entitled. Instead of meaning shame and being apologized for it will mean purity and will be glorified."⁵²

Sex equals "copulation" and "reproduction"; hardly romantic.

This didactic Whitman dipped more toward fustian in his celebration of sex—however functional it might be. Franklin Evans (his early "temperance" novel) indicates that glorification of sex was rooted largely in wish-fulfillment: the novel is like an adolescent day-dream, with its voluptuous and varied love affairs—its moralizing seems intrusive among the creations of a highly sexed, but frustrated temperament. Similarly, the sexual advances of his Adamic poems were claims on those faceless, athletic women beyond his range of experience who in imagination would accept and complete him. Wooing took two stages: the ritual of virility, shaking the plumes of manliness; the sexual advance and consummation itself. Nothing of "sentimental" love-making, of affection, of social responsibility interfered with the mating ceremony—the male displayed, boasted of his prowess, and conquered. Strides the poet into the bower as Adam:

Lusty, phallic, with potent original loins, perfectly sweet,
I, chanter of Adamic songs,
Through the new garden the West, the great cities calling,
Deliriate, thus prelude what is generated, offering these, offering
myself. . . .⁵³

"Know," he calls, "I am a man, attracting, at any time, her I but look upon, or touch with the tips of my fingers."⁵⁴ Then he closes:

I draw you close to me, you women,
I cannot let you go, I would do you good,
I am for you, and you are for me

It is I, you women, I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable, but I love you,
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,

I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for these States,
 I press with slow rude muscle,
 I brace myself effectually, I listen to no entreaties,
 I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long accumulated
 within me.⁵⁵

"Healthy" functionality undercuts sensuality, passion, even "love"—despite the almost ludicrous "but I love you." Still however manly his asserted program, Whitman's attitudes toward heterosexual relations remain essentially adolescent.

Beneath the clamor of virility, puberty whispers on in his poems: the overwhelming discovery of the body and sex; the high-pitched celebration; the dreams of glory and myriad conquests; the idealization and generalization of women; and the escape from the binding mores of society. Suddenly there bursts upon the boy's serenity the new world of sex:

The no-form'd stings that sights, people, objects sting me with,
 The hubb'd sting of myself, stinging me as much as it ever can
 any one,

The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only privileged
 feelers may be intimate where they are,

The curious roamer the hand roaming all over the body, the
 bashful withdrawing of flesh where the fingers soothingly
 pause and edge themselves,

The limpid liquid within the young man,

The vex'd corrosion so pensive and so painful,

The torment, the irritable tide that will not be at rest,

The like of the same I feel, the like of the same in others,

The young man that flushes and flushes, the young woman that
 flushes and flushes,

The young man that wakes deep at night, the hot hand seeking
 to repress what would master him,

The mystic amorous night, the strange half-welcome pangs, visions,
 sweats,

The pulse pounding through palms and trembling encircling fin-
 gers, the young man all color'd, red, ashamed, angry. . . .⁵⁶

The body is freshly discovered and celebrated:

O my body! . . .

Head, neck, hair, ears, drop and tympan of the ears,

Eyes, eye-fringes, iris of the eye, eyebrows, and the waking or
 sleeping of the lids. . . .⁵⁷

And so caressingly down. Dreams—ever a new Female, ever
 a new success:

O to be yielded to you whoever you are, and you to be yielded
to me in defiance of the world!

O to return to Paradise! O bashful and feminine!

O to draw you to me, to plant on you for the first time the lips
of a determin'd man.⁵⁸

The man of the world, hearty, magnetic, freely scattering his
seed, but also the shamefaced boy—vision and reality:

O hotcheek'd and blushing! O foolish hectic!

O for pity's sake, no one must see me now! my clothes were
stolen while I was abed,

Now I am thrust forth, where shall I run?

I feel ashamed to go naked about the world,

And I am curious to know where my feet stand—and what is
this flooding me, childhood or manhood—and the hunger
that crosses the bridge between.⁵⁹

The woman is never Jane or Jill, never a special lover, but
always a woman, women, "whoever you are." Love must be
universal:

By "love" as I have used the term. . . I do not mean the sickly
sentimentality which is so favorite a theme with novelists and
magazine writers. What I would inculcate is that healthy, cheer-
ful feeling of kindness and good will, and affectionate tender-
ness, a warm-heartedness, the germs of which are plentifully
sown by God in each human breast. . .⁶⁰

And sex must be impersonal:

That I infuse you with grits and jets of life,

I am not to be scorned:—I Compell;

It is quite indifferent to me who [you] are.⁶¹

I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women
that are warm-blooded and sufficient for me,

I see that they understand me and do not deny me,

I see that they are worthy of me, I will be the robust husband
of these women.⁶²

No wonder the author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the cham-
pion of personal intimacy, cried out against "A Woman Waits
for Me":

He might as well have said: "The femaleness waits for my
maleness." Oh, beautiful generalization and abstraction! Oh,
biological function.

"Athletic mothers of the States—" Muscles and wombs.
They needn't have had faces at all.⁶³

Faceless as she is, the woman who waits "contains all, nothing is lacking."⁶⁴ Perfect, naked, entirely responsive she (or they, it is the same) is the forever-fleeting ideal of adolescent dream:

They are tann'd in the face by shining suns and blowing winds,
Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and strength . . .⁶⁵

Together the poet and his ideal will escape to a mountain's heights:

O that you and I escape from the rest and go utterly off, free
and lawless,

Two hawks in the air, two fishes swimming in the sea not more
lawless than we. . .⁶⁶

To escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!
To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous!
To court destruction with taunts, with invitations!⁶⁷

But it was only from himself that Whitman had to escape, and only into his poems that he could.

As a record of adolescent love the "Children of Adam" poems are remarkable, in fact almost unique in our literature. Frequently flatulent and bombastic, they never contain the tenderness we have come to associate with mature love; that tenderness, the attitude of the lover, Whitman reserves for his poems to men. As an intellectual, programmatic construct, ". . . a Cluster of Poems the same to the passion of woman-love as the *Calmus-Leaves* are to adhesiveness, manly love,"⁶⁸ they fail because Whitman did not know and could not fully imagine the same passion for women that he did for men. But the very adolescent braggadocio serves as a perhaps too-imitative correlative to what the poems are: unconscious disclosures of a frustrated, yearning, oversexed boy. And as revelations of what they seek to hide these poems are as fascinating, if not always meritorious, as any other part of *Leaves*.

II

Alarmed and frustrated by women, Whitman turned to men for companionship and love. In notes for a proposed lecture, "To women," he confirmed his dissatisfaction with heterosexual relations and his need for man friends:

I desire to say to you, and let you ponder well upon it, the fact

that under present arrangements the love and comradeship of a woman, of his wife, however welcome, however complete, does not and cannot satisfy the grandest requirements of a man's soul for love and comradeship.—The man he loves, he often loves with more passionate attachment than he can bestow on any woman, even his wife.—Is it that the growth of love needs the free air—the seasons, perhaps more wildness more rudeness? Why is the love of women so invalid? so transient?⁶⁹

To women he could offer the compassion and interest of a friend; to men alone the passion and devoted intensity of a lover. To Whitman came the terrible realization that what he had to have was not merely the respect or admiration, not only the friendship, but the love of those to whom he was drawn; that the meeting of eyes could not be casual, and that a smile must have the personal, secret meaning of lovers.⁷⁰

Whitman called this emotion "adhesiveness," which he defined as "love, that fuses, ties and aggregates, making the races comrades, and fraternizing all."⁷¹ But this was a programmatic interpretation of a far more immediate and throbbing passion. One of the phrenologists, from whom Whitman borrowed the term, indicated its carnal overtones:

Those in whom it is large [i.e. the organ of adhesiveness], feel an involuntary impulse to embrace, and cling to any object which is capable of expressing fondness.⁷²

Another showed its extreme emotional force:

Those who have adhes. *very large*, or predominant, instinctively recognize it in each other; soon become mutually and strongly attached; desire to cling around the objects of their love; take more interest and delight in the exercise of friendship than in anything else; . . . dread an interruption of friendship as the greatest of calamities. . . Their friends may be *few*, but will be *dear*, . . . their social intercourse delightful beyond description; their separation painful, in the extreme; their loss, agonizing, almost beyond endurance; and the interruption of friendship, a frequent source of partial derangement.⁷³

A kind of physicality and all but overwhelming power similarly characterized Whitman's "adhesive" passions.

Touch was all important to him:⁷⁴ bodily contact with men not only satisfied his need to "feel" reality, but consummated his worship of the male physique. He was throughout his life impelled to hug and kiss his men friends.

To Harry Stafford he wrote: "Dear son, how I wish you could come in now, even if but for an hour & take off your coat, & sit down on my lap."⁷⁵ And Traubel relates a tender moment with Whitman:

W. said: "Come, kiss me for good night." He was still lying down. I reached over him and we kissed. He took my hand—pressed it fervently. "I am in luck. Are you? I guess God just sent us for each other."⁷⁶

This physicality was by no means solely a sublimation of sexual desires, but was motivated also by the drive for the warmth of human contact, which requires satisfaction as much as hunger or thirst.⁷⁷ Moreover, for a man as feminine in his perceptions as Whitman, it was a way of showing his affection. Thus in the famous scene of the twenty-eight men bathers, Whitman projects himself into the watching woman.⁷⁸ Physical contact also provided Whitman with one of his basic symbols of man for man love: the lovers with their arms thrown about each other's necks or waists.

Besides physical contact, Whitman searched in his relations with men for a substitute to replace his own rejected father,⁷⁹ adopted "sons" through whom he would perpetuate himself, but above all for companions and lovers. In view of Whitman's passion for marriage and a family, one can understand his attempts to surmount his inability to have real sons by "adopting" as his own the young soldiers, horse-car drivers, farmers, he everywhere met. To these he was a spiritual and intellectual father, introducing them to literature, guiding their taste and attitudes. In another way he was a mother (really the more natural role for him), buying their clothes, nursing them, cooking for them. And in return he received affection of sons for a father:

. . . i hope the day may come wen i can do for yo some gud in return, for father yo donte know how i do love you i donte know wy it is i am more attached yo than en ny one that i was acquainted with.⁸⁰

Or from another of his boys:

You will allow me to call you Father wont you. I do not know that I told you that both my parents were dead but it is true and now Walt you will be a second Father to me won't you. for my love for you is hardly less than my love for my

natural parent I have never before met with a man that I could love as I do you Still there is nothing strange about it for "to know you is to love you" And how any person could know you and not love you is a wonder to me.⁸¹

Thus Whitman not only satisfied his latent paternalism, but entered a wedge against oblivion, for through his "sons," as in his *Leaves*, he could gratify his need for self-perpetuation.

But filial affection was not sufficient unto Whitman's "adhesiveness." That he required a fuller, more intense response than "sons" could supply is indicated by his relations with Peter Doyle. They met abruptly, informally, mutually attracted:

"We fell to each other at once. I was a conductor. The night was very stormy,—he had been over to see Burroughs before he came down to take the car—the storm was awful. Walt had his blanket—it was thrown round his shoulders—he seemed like an old sea-captain. He was the only passenger, it was a lonely night, so I thought I would go in and talk with him. Something in me made me do it and something in him drew me that way. He used to say there was something in me had the same effect on him. Anyway, I went into the car. We were familiar at once—I put my hand on his knee—we understood. He did not get out at the end of the trip—in fact he went all the way back with me.⁸²

They rode together frequently, drawing closer as, in the months that followed, Whitman adopted Doyle. Separation, as the phrenologists predicted, brought agony to Walt and letters to Doyle:

I think of you very often, dearest comrade, and with more calmness than when I was there. I find it first rate to think of you Pete, and to know that you are there all right and that I shall return and we will be together again. I don't know what I should do if I hadn't you to think of and look forward to.⁸³

More than father-son affection or mere abstract Platonic attachment, this is passionate, perturbed love, love that is terribly dependent—but, at last, mutual:

Pete there was something in that hour from 10 to 11 o'clock (parting though it was) that has left me pleasure and comfort for good—I never dreamed that you made so much of having me with you, nor that you could feel so downcast at losing me. I foolishly thought it was all on the other side. But all I will

say further on the subject is, I now see clearly, that was all wrong.⁸⁴

Thus Whitman's attachments developed in passionate perturbation, but never, so far as one can tell, in carnality.

Rather, these friendships permitted him, like many others whose instincts force them toward their own sex, to channel his impulses into socially commendable outlets, particularly into charitable work among men.⁸⁵ He himself recognized the inner compulsion which drove him to work in the hospitals as something akin to that passionate manly love which possessed him:

Then came the War. "I was no spring chicken then." His consecration "was no youthful entausiasm—no mere ebullition of spirits—but deliberate, radical, fundamental." Here he paused, turned his face towards me, passed his fingers, spread, over his heart. "Deliberate? more than that: it was necessary: I went from the call of something within—something, I cannot explain what—something I could not disregard." Whether for good or bad he "could not pause to weight it." "There's something in the human eritter that only needs to be budged to reveal itself: not always observed: it is a folded leaf: not absent because we fail to see it: the right man comes—the right hour; the leaf is lifted.⁸⁶

This need joined with Whitman's compassion to direct him toward his hospital activities (which, incidentally, began in New York long before the Civil War). In such work he could practice his principle of sympathy, which in his program required action to relieve misery, and at the same time sublimate the smouldering yearning for lovers that might otherwise have consumed him.

In his hospital labors Whitman played out his more feminine impulses. He realized that his own place was that of sympathetic companion rather than trumpeting prophet and leader:

Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarum, and urge
relentless war,
But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd and I resign'd
myself,
To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the
dead.⁸⁷

He gave up the male role of leader and soldier and assumed

the for him more suitably feminine robe of nurse. For as Burroughs saw,

With all his rank masculinity, there was a curious feminine undertone in . . . his voice, the delicate texture of his skin, the gentleness of his touch and ways, the attraction he had for children and common people.⁸⁸

Whitman himself did recognize his femininity, insisting that he took after the women in his family, and claiming that " 'Leaves of Grass is essentially a woman's book,' " that its " 'cry is the cry. . . of the woman sex. . . .' " ⁸⁹ From this female perspective, he formulated what Bychowski calls a "truly feminine cult of manliness and the phallos."⁹⁰

The expression of a perfect made man appears not only in his face—but in his limbs—the motion of his hands and arms and all his joints—his walk—the carriage of his neck—and the fleck of his waist and hips. Dress does not hide him. The quality he has and the clean strong sweet supple nature he has strike through cotton and woolen—To see him walk conveys the impression of hearing a beautiful poem.—To see his back and the back of his neck and shoulderside is a spectacle. Great is the body!⁹¹

Again and again in the poems Whitman revels in the delight of a man's supple body:

The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses, the block swags underneath on its tied-over chain,
The negro that drives the long dray of the stoneyard, steady and tall he stands pois'd on one leg on the string piece,
His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens over his hip-band,
His glance is calm and commanding, he tosses the slouch of his hat away from his forehead,
The sun falls on his crispy hair and mustache, falls on the black of his polish'd and perfect limbs.⁹²

Whitman was conscious of the ambiguity, perhaps of the perverseness on which this feminine ardor bordered. His irrational outbursts against Symonds' innocuous questions about "Calamus" indicate his testiness on the subject when, after the fires had burnt out, he could sense their darker implications:

I said to W.: "That's a humble letter enough: I don't see anything in that to get excited about. He don't ask you to answer the old question. In fact, he rather apologizes for having asked it." W. fired up. "Who is excited? As to that question,

he does ask it again and again: asks it, asks it, asks it." I laughed at his vehemence: "Well, suppose he does. It does no harm. Besides, you've got nothing to hide. I think your silence might lead him to suppose there was a nigger in the woodpile." "Oh nonsense! But for thirty years my enemies and friends have been asking me questions about the Leaves: I'm tired of not answering questions."⁹³

Such self-doubt is registered more directly in the poems. Mourning his lost love, the poet admits "I am ashamed—but it is useless—I am what I am," and asks, "I wonder if other men ever have the like, out of like feelings?"⁹⁴ But these terrible doubts could for him be answered only by the affection, the presence of "my lovers, my dear friends." For in his lonely life it was to these young men that Whitman had to turn for consolation and love.

Pathetically, his special friends never really fathomed Whitman's ardor, appeared in fact confused and bashful before it. His correspondence with Tom Sawyer reads like a pitious mirror-image of the Anne Gilchrist affair. Here Whitman was the active, passionate one:

Dear comrade, you must not forget me, for I never shall you. My love you have in life or death forever. I don't know how you feel about it, but it is the wish of my heart to have your friendship, and also that if you should come safe out of this war, we should come together again in some place where we could make our living, and be true comrades and never be separated while life lasts—and take Lew Brown too, and never separate from him, or if things are not so to be—if you get these lines, my dear, darling comrade, and anything should go wrong, so that we do not meet again here on earth, it seems to me (the way I feel now) that my soul could never be entirely happy, even in the world to come, without you, dear comrade. [What I say is pretty strong talk I suppose but it is I mean exactly what I say am writing have written] And if it is God's will, I hope we shall yet [live] meet, as I say, if you [could] feel as I do about it—and if it is destined that we shall not, you have my love none the less, whatever should keep you from me, no matter how many years. God bless you, Tom, and preserve you through the perils of the fight.⁹⁵

Whitman continued to write, asking repeatedly why Sawyer did not answer. Finally, a note from Tom, probably written for him by some more literate member of his outfit:

Dear Brother

As you have given me permission, I have taken the liberty to address you as above. And I assure you I fully reciprocate your friendship as expressed in your letter and it will afford me great pleasure to meet you after the war will have terminated or sooner if circumstances will permit.⁹⁶

How this letter must have torn Whitman; how ironical that he would one day reply to Mrs. Gilchrist: "I too send you my love." Later, however, Sawyer replied, apparently in his own person:

Dear Brother I hardly know what to say to you in this letter for it is my first one to you but it will not be my last I should have written to you before but I am not a great hand at writtin and I have ben very buisy firming my tent for this winter and I hope you will forgive me and in the future I will do better and I hope we may meet again in this world and now as it is getting very late you must excuse this short letter this time—and I hope to here from soon I send you my love and best wishes.⁹⁷

This was the best Whitman could expect from his shy, uneducated boys; clearly a passionate nature could little be satisfied by such replies.⁹⁸

Howevermuch love Whitman showered on his young men, he could never obtain full reciprocation, full satisfaction of his yearning for the one perfect comrade: "Why is it a sense comes always crushing on me, as of one happiness I have missed in life? and one friend and companion I have never made?"⁹⁹ Not finding in life his desired ideal, Whitman had to turn to the unknown audience of his poems for final love and consummation:

Poemet embodying the idea I wander along my life hardly ever meeting comrades. . . . For I have not met them Therefore I have put my passionate love of comrades in my poems.¹⁰⁰

Thus in "Calamus" Whitman opens the face of love to his reader.

The "Calamus" group, although not strictly ordered, incorporates many of the characteristics of traditional sonnet sequences. The poet cannot write without his lover near him. His lover answers his doubts, contents him with his lot merely by his presence, and shows him that the root of all philosophy is love. The poet wishes to be remembered

only as a lover and a celebrator of love, discounting other kinds of fame as superficial.¹⁰¹ Always qualifying these love lyrics, however, is the fact that they are directed to men, for the kind of love essential to such poetry Whitman could experience only in relations with men. It is therefore necessary for the poet to lead us away from the trodden paths and the prying eyes—the Calamus emotion avoids public display. Whereas he would stride off with his women defying society to do its worst, with his men, secretly and shyly, he slips out to where he can permit the smouldering fires to flame. He does not any longer “compell,” but warns:

Whoever you are holding me now in hand,
Without one thing all will be useless,
I give you fair warning before you attempt me further,
I am not what you supposed, but far different.¹⁰²

Still behind the admonition is the desirous lover tenderly beckoning the new person to join him at the pond side where grow the “Calamus” roots of manly love: “Passing stranger! you do not know how longingly I look upon you.”¹⁰³

From this remote backwater emerges Whitman’s Democracy, the Democracy of comrades, expanded from the intimate “Calamus” love to the adhesive join of the coming republic:

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of
America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all
over the prairies,

I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other’s
necks,

By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.

For you, these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme!
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.¹⁰⁴

It was not only for Democracy, however, that Whitman trilled, but for Walt Whitman—had he sung nothing but ditties like this last, he would never have survived his adulators.

For us Whitman's most affecting Leaves are those in which he does not try to convert love to program, those which spring directly from his troubled breast:

Scented herbage of my breast,
Leaves from you I glean, I write, to be perused best afterwards,
Tomb-leaves, body-leaves growing up above me above death,

You are often more bitter than I can bear, you burn and sting me,
Yet you are beautiful to me you faint-tinged roots, you make
me think of death,

Death is beautiful from you, (what indeed is finally beautiful
except death and love?)

O I think it is not for life I am chanting here my chants of
lovers, I think it must be for death . . . 105

Baffling, balking life is cast aside as the "usual adjustments and pleasures," while "adhesiveness" merges with death, with delicious desirable death. For only in death and beyond death can Whitman embrace the ideally responsive comrade, the reader who will wholly accept and complete his song:

When you read these I that was visible am become invisible,
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me,
Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you and become
your comrade;

Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I am now
with you.) 106

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FOOTNOTES

1. *In Ke Walt Whitman*, ed. Horace Traubel, R. M. Bucke, and T. B. Harned (Philadelphia, 1893), p. 34.
2. He wrote to Nelly O'Connor (11/15/63): "I find my New York boys the same gay-hearted joyous fellows, full of friendship & determined to have pleasure. We have been together quite a good deal. They have given me little supper parties, Men only. With drinks &c. of course we have great times." Manuscript in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of The New York Public Library.
3. Letter to John R. Johnston, Jr., 2/18/71, in Berg Collection.
4. Gay Wilson Allen, *The Solitary Singer* (New York, 1955), p. 403.
5. See Calamus, *Letters to Peter Doyle*, ed. R. M. Bucke (Boston, 1897), pp. 47-48. Cf. Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 403.

6. *Calamus*, p. 49.
7. Letter to Charles W. Eldridge, 11/17/63, The Oscar Lion Collection of Walt Whitman, Reserve Division, New York Public Library. Quoted by Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 305.
8. *The Gathering of the Forces*, ed. Cleveland Rodgers and John Black (New York, 1920), II, 88-89.
9. "Sketches on Womanhood" (ms. version of lines from "A Woman Waits For Me"), in Barrett Collection, University of Virginia Library.
10. Ms. in Harned Collection of The Library of Congress, Box #3. Printed in *Walt Whitman's Workshop*, ed. Clifton J. Furness (Cambridge, 1928), p. 63.
11. "Specimen Days," *Complete Prose Works* (Philadelphia, 1892), p. 153.
12. "A Family Record," ms. in Berg Collection.
13. "Specimen Days," p. 12. "Quoted" by Whitman from John Burrough's *Notes*.
14. Carpenter and Bucke recognized this and, thinking a third sex actually possible, tried to justify it. Their primary example, of course, was Whitman himself, whose "bisexuality" seemed to them to presage the eventual desired fusion. See Edward Carpenter, *Days With Walt Whitman* (London, 1906), and R. M. Bucke (with H. L. Traubel and T. B. Harned), "Introduction" to the *Complete Writings of Walt Whitman* ed. Bucke, Harned, and Traubel (New York, 1902), vol. I, and also scattered comments elsewhere in Bucke's writings.
15. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (New York, 1914), III, 541.
16. *Ibid.*, III, 525.
17. See *Letters Written By Walt Whitman to His Mother* (New York, 1936).
18. "The Shadow and Light of a Young Man's Soul," *Uncollected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Emory Holloway (Garden City, 1921), I, 229-234. Hereafter abbreviated as *UPP*.
19. Letter of 2/7/73 printed in *In Re*, p. 77.
20. See plot outlines in Notebook "C," Library of Congress Walt Whitman Collection, Box 15; also "Young Grimes," *UPP*, I, 2-3.
21. William Eldridge to J. H. Johnston, 5/29/02, in Berg Collection. Quoted by Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 370.
22. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (Boston, 1906), I, 332.
23. *Complete Writings*, X, 24.
24. Traubel, *Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 11.
25. "Faces," 5: 9-12, 15-17. The texts in this paper are those of the "Inclusive" edition of *Leaves of Grass*, ed. Emory Holloway (Garden City, 1948) unless otherwise indicated.

26. Typescript in The Oscar Lion Collection of Walt Whitman, Reserve Division, New York Public Library. Printed in Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 279; cf. p. 571, note 60.
27. In ms. notebook in Library of Congress Collection. Quoted by Louis Untermeyer in *The Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman* (New York, 1948), p. 53. Cf. Emory Holloway, "Whitman Pursued," *American Literature*, XXVII, 1-11 (March, 1955).
28. Peter Doyle's words as recorded by Bucke in *Calamus*, p. 25.
29. Will Wallace to Whitman: "I am surprised at your frenchy leaving you in such a deplorable state, but you are not alone. I had to dismiss mine to save the reputation of the hospital and your humble servant." Transcription of original in Bucke Collection by Emory Holloway, reproduced in G. L. Sixbey, "Whitman's Middle Years," Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Yale University, 1941, p. 209.
30. "Some day when I feel more like it than I do now I will tell you about her." Whitman to Traubel, *Walt Whitman In Camden*, I, 389.
31. Ellen H. Calder, "Personal Recollection of Walt Whitman," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIX, 830 (June, 1907).
32. See UPP, II, 7, f.n., and Calder, "Recollection," p. 829.
33. *The Gathering of the Forces*, II, 216-217.
34. *New York Dissected*, ed. Emory Holloway and Ralph Adimari (New York, 1936), p. 96.
35. UPP, II, 19.
36. *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman*, ed. Thomas B. Harned (New York, 1918), p. 60-61.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
39. Located in University of Pennsylvania Library, quoted by Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 439.
40. Printed in Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, ed. Sculley Bradley (Philadelphia, 1953), IV, 313.
41. *Ibid.*, IV, 313-314.
42. UPP, II, 7, f.n.
43. Traubel, *Walt Whitman in Camden*, III, 452-453.
44. See, e.g., "I Sing the Body Electric," 5: 1-9.
45. Frederick Schyberg, *Walt Whitman*, trans. Evie Allison Allen (New York, 1951), p. 162.
46. Klaus Mann, "The Present Greatness of Walt Whitman," *Decision*, I, 23 (April, 1941).
47. "Song of Myself," 5: 6-14.
48. "A Memorandum at a Venture," *Prose Works*, pp. 302-303.
49. See Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (New York, 1908), II, 152.

50. *UPP*, I, 48.
51. See unpublished notebook in Library of Congress Collection, Box 15A.
52. Traubel, *Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 151-152.
53. "Ages and Ages Returning At Intervals," 11. 3-6.
54. "One Hour To Madness and Joy," 1. 8 of 1860 version, "Inclusive" Edition, p. 589.
55. "A Woman Waits for Me," 11. 20-23, 26-30.
56. "Spontaneous Me," 11. 23-34.
57. "I Sing the Body Electric," 9: 1, 5-6.
58. "One Hour To Madness and Joy," 11. 7-9.
59. 1855 reading of part of section one of "The Sleepers"; "Inclusive" edition, p. 683.
60. *UPP*, I, 48.
61. *UPP*, II, 72.
62. "A Woman Waits For Me," 11. 12-14.
63. D. H. Lawrence, "Whitman," *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Garden City, 1953), pp. 179-180.
64. "A Woman Waits For Me," 11. 12-14.
65. *Ibid.*, 11. 16-17.
66. "From Pent-Up Aching Rivers," 11. 29-30.
67. "One Hour To Madness and Joy," 11. 17-19.
68. *Complete Writings*, IX, 150.
69. Ms. in Harned Collection of The Library of Congress, Box #3. Printed in *Walt Whitman's Workshop*, pp. 63-64.
70. I do not suggest that Whitman had any overt homosexual experiences; there is no evidence whatever to indicate that he was, in our sense of the word, a "homosexual." I do assert, however, that he sought from men the kind of day to day warmth and intimacy usually found by a man in relations with a woman. The debate about Whitman's sexual nature has been considerably muddled by failure to distinguish between urge and practice and by the application of twentieth-century psychological abstractions to nineteenth-century realities.
71. "Democratic Vistas," *Prose Works*, p. 220.
72. George Combe, *A System of Phrenology* (Boston, 1835), p. 143.
73. *Phrenology: Proved, Illustrated, and Applied* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1856), pp. 65-66; the book by Whitman's first publishers.
74. . . . I guess I am mainly sensitive to the wonderfulness & perhaps spirituality of things in their physical & concrete expression—and have celebrated all that." Letter to William O'Connor, 4/18/88, in Berg Collection.
75. Letter of 6/19/77 in Berg Collection.
76. *Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 82.

77. "One night naively assume that the need for companionship is a product of acculturation. But, according to Sullivan, it is not. Animals manifest gregarious traits. Furthermore, people have a need for physical contact, a need to touch one another and to be physically close. But this need for physical closeness is *not* in itself a sexual phenomenon." Patrick Mullahy, "A Theory of Interpersonal Relations and the Evolution of Personality," in Harry Stack Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (Washington, 1947), p. 120.
78. "Song of Myself," 11: 9-15.
79. His relations with Walter Whitman were always strained. In the early stories, desperately autobiographical in meaning, the sensitive, artistic son is frequently pitted against a harsh, tyrannical father-figure. Walt was in effect adopted by some of his early preceptors in the newspaper trade.
80. W. E. Vandermark, 12/16/63, in "Soldier's Letters to Me During the War (Some Since)," Whitman's scrapbook of letters; located in Berg Collection.
81. Elijah D. Fox, 11/10/65, in the Oscar Lion Collection of Walt Whitman, Reserve Division, New York Public Library.
82. *Calamus*, p. 23. "Adventures of this kind are frequent," William D. O'Connor commented, explaining Whitman's attractiveness to plain, unlettered men. *The Good Gray Poet* (New York, 1866), p. 9.
83. *Calamus*, pp. 36-37.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
85. See Eustace Chesser, *Sexual Behavior—Normal and Abnormal* (New York, 1949), who suggests that "non-practicing homosexuals sometimes seek to find outlets for the sexuality in non-sexual spheres by taking up work, often of a voluntary kind, among their own sex," p. 158.
86. Traubel, *Walt Whitman in Camden*, III, 204. Note the image of the folded leaf, crucial in the "Calamus" poems.
87. "The Wound Dresser," 11: 4-6.
88. John Burroughs, *Whitman: A Study* (Boston, 1896), p. 49.
89. Traubel, *Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 331.
90. Gustav Bychowski, "Walt Whitman: A Study in Sublimation," *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, ed. G. Roheim (New York, 1951), I, 240.
91. *Walt Whitman's Workshop*, p. 62.
92. "Song of Myself," 13: 1-5; cf. 12: 3-8. Contrast Whitman's descriptions of the male and female forms in "I Sing the Body Electric." The woman's body is never really described, while the man's is detailed with loving tenderness.
93. Traubel, *Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 204. With this should

- be compared a note Whitman wrote to himself, presumably sometime in 1870: "Depress the adhesive nature/ It is in excess—making life in torment/ Ah this diseased, feverish disproportionate adhesiveness." In The Library of Congress Whitman Collection, Notebook 9, "Lincoln Material," on a page with a clipping dated March, 1870. Printed in *UPP*, II, 96.
94. "Hours Continuing Long, Sore and Heavy-Hearted," 11. 6-7.
95. Draft of letter in the Berg Collection. Material in brackets is crossed out in the original. Quoted by Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 298.
96. In Berg Collection. Printed in Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 299.
97. In Berg Collection. Sawyer's letter to Lew Brown shows, like this letter, his illiteracy and poor hand. The previous letter is perfect in construction and penmanship and therefore almost certainly not written directly by him.
98. Whitman expressed in his letter to Sawyer another of his favorite desires—to set up housekeeping with his boys. To Doyle he wrote: "My darling, if you are not well when I come back I will get a good room or two in some quiet place, and we will live together and devote ourselves altogether to the job of curing you, and making you stronger and healthier than ever." *Calamus*, p. 55.
99. *UPP*, I, 112, f.n.
100. Printed in Allen, *Solitary Singer*, p. 504.
101. "I Saw In Louisiana A Live-Oak Growing"; "Of The Terrible doubt of Appearances"; "The Base of All Metaphysics"; "Recorders Ages Hence"; "When I Heard At The Close Of The Day."
102. "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now In Hand," 11. 1-4.
103. "To A Stranger," 1. 1.
104. "For You O Democracy."
105. "Scented Herbage Of My Breast," 11. 1-3, 9-12.
106. "Full Of Life Now," 11. 5-8.



The Expressive Value of Gifts

by

Ben Bursten, M.D.

Gifts have achieved considerable prominence as elements of social interaction in contemporary American society. On many occasions we are expected to signify our good wishes to others by giving them presents. Thus, gifts are exchanged at Christmastime; birthdays are not complete without presents; even Easter baskets and Valentine candy have become popular. Likewise, on Mother's Day and Father's Day, it is not sufficient to remember and honor our parents; custom requires that we show our feelings in a material, tangible form. The list of socially encouraged occasions for giving is indeed a large one, and when this list is exhausted there still remain certain occasions where although custom does not demand a gift, many people bring or send a present as a means of expressing their sentiments.

Since this means of expression has become so important in our culture, the gift merits a certain amount of systematic attention and investigation. And yet, while several writers have discussed the psychology of giving and receiving (for example, Abraham (2), Fenichel (4), more recently, Perls (10) and many others), little has been written about the gift, itself, and its significance in the communicative process. To be sure, any separation of the gift from the giver and the act of giving on the one hand, and the receiver and the act of getting on the other, must be arbitrary. The whole process of giving and receiving is a continuous and interrelated one. In this respect the gift is much like speech, and as Lorenz (9) has commented, language (in our case, the gift) acquires meaning only as a part of a "triad situation" involving speaker, hearer and content (donor, recipient and gift). However, in this discussion, we shall focus on the gift, itself, as a means of communication. We shall not attempt a de-

tailed analysis of the dynamics of the acts of giving and receiving except as these dynamics may help us understand the significance of the gift.

A gift is a vehicle of expression — it is an element in a communicative process. The giver uses a material object symbolically as well as literally to convey something to the receiver. And, as a means of expression, the gift has attributes which are common to other means of expression. We have already implied a similarity between the gift and speech. It is reasonable to suppose, then, that an understanding of one mode of communication might throw light the other.

A thorough discussion of speech at this point would represent a needless digression; however, some observations made by Sterba (11) prove to have particular pertinence to the understanding of the gift. Sterba has described a three-fold aspect of language. "First, it is used to express the *conscious* contents which the ego wants to communicate: that is, it expresses what a person wants to say. Second, it expresses *unconscious* contents *through* the conscious expression as mediator . . . Third, we find that the peculiarities of *pronunciation* of language and the mannerisms of speech serve in their own way as manifestations of unconscious contents apart from the verbal expressions in their obvious and in their hidden meanings. This third meaning of speech is . . . very closely knit into the character structure of the personality . . . " (*Italics are Sterba's.*)

Let us now consider a gift to see if this type of analysis applies. A lady with whom I am acquainted went on a short vacation trip with her husband to Florida. On her return North, she brought with her some gifts for her daughter, son-in-law and infant grandson. To the daughter she gave a terry-cloth beach robe, on the back of which is a picture of a man playing an mandolin. The robe is white while the picture is in bright "blazer" colors — the whole thing gives a rather gaudy effect. The gift to the son-in-law was a very handsome tie of a conservative blue weave design. It is obviously a tie which would appeal to a most reserved and dignified person. However, on the inside of the tie there is

a brightly colored picture of a seductive young lady in an abbreviated bathing suit. The child's gift consisted of a shirt on which is pictured a little "Huckleberry Finn" type of boy who has been playing with paints. He has painted a picture of himself all clean and brushed with a halo over his head and an inscription reading "I'm a little angel." This "little angel" is obviously winking his eye. The angelic picture is held up in such a manner that it covers most of the "Huckleberry Finn" boy's face. The overall effect is unmistakable — a playful paint-smeared little boy is peeking out from behind a picture of himself as a clean, angelic child.

On the level of conscious communication, these gifts are not difficult to understand. The lady wanted (or intended) to bring back souvenirs, to give something "clever" (to make a joke), and, perhaps, to give something useful.

A thorough understanding of the significance of these gifts as expressions of unconscious material would, of course, require intensive knowledge of the people involved and lengthy discussion with them. These sources of data are not available (although I do know them quite well), but clues to the unconscious meanings can certainly be found in the gifts themselves, and the interpretations can be at least partially verified with what I do know about the people.

First, we should note that this type of gift (especially to the son-in-law and grandson) is unusual from this woman. She seldom plays this kind of "joke" although she often gives presents. It is fair to say that, probably as a result of her vacation, unconscious contents and instinctual impulses were able to play a larger part (or at least a more conspicuous part) in the choice of the gift. Grinstein (7) has discussed this aspect of vacations and he points out the relaxation of controls and the enhancement of the pleasure principle when people "get away." That the gift to the son-in-law has meaning in terms of unconscious and instinctual contents is obvious; this offering of an attractive girl is undoubtedly an offering of the donor, herself. This interpretation is strengthened by the interaction between the lady and her son-in-law which I observed shortly after the gift was given. She had

offered him some chocolate candy "kisses" while they were watching television. He refused them and she said, "What's the matter, don't you like my kisses?" However, the urge to offer herself is attended by considerable guilt, and, in the case of the tie, it had to be concealed behind a veil of respectability and conventionality. Thus, the picture of the girl is hidden behind a conservative front where others cannot see it. Even under the relaxing effect of the vacation, this woman could communicate only a secret attraction — a pattern of relating which is probably characteristic of this rather inhibited lady.

Evidence of instinctual prompting is also found in the gift to the grandson. Here, problems of messiness and cleanliness are expressed. In this regard, it is interesting to note that anality is a strong feature of this lady's character. She suffers from chronic constipation, relies heavily on mineral oil to insure regularity, and has frequently shown overconcern about the bowel habits of her children.

Again with this gift we see not only the area of preoccupation, but also how the woman attempts to handle her promptings. Here, too, this lady is unable clearly to express herself, but (via the little boy) she hides behind a picture of cleanliness. What we are seeing, of course, is the vacillation and indecision, the expression and retraction which is so much a part of this woman's character.

The significance of the gift to the daughter is somewhat more difficult to fathom. The probable meaning emerged only after I had an opportunity to talk with both the lady and her daughter. The lady told me she had picked out the beach robe because "that's what they all wear down there." The daughter was quite disappointed with the gift; she said that her mother always buys gifts for her because they are "fashionable." The mother would never wear these gaily colored clothes herself. On other occasions, the daughter has suggested that she feels the mother is using her as a means of attracting the father (he is a jolly man who likes brightly colored clothes, cars, etc). This inhibited lady cannot herself wear the "fashionable" clothes which would attract her hus-

band, but she must give them to her daughter to wear. This seems very much to be what Anna Freud (5) has called "altruistic surrender" — through projection of her impulses on the daughter and identification with her, the lady can achieve at least some of the instinctual gratification she has to deny herself. Viewed in this light, we see that this gift, also has instinctual meanings.

Still another meaning of the gift to the daughter is suggested. Before the daughter was married, the prospective son-in-law was fond of playing the banjo and guitar. The mother was quite aware of this and had commented on it frequently. Thus, it is entirely possible that this beach robe with the man playing the mandolin as its design was the mother's way of giving the son-in-law back to her daughter after having tried to seduce him with the tie. Solid evidence for this interpretation is lacking; here we can only speculate, but this interpretation, again, is very consistent with this lady's guilt about expression of instinctual urges.

We could speculate further about the meaning of these gifts, but the aim of this paper is not fully to analyse a particular gift, but to point out that there is a wealth of material embodied in this mode of expression.

With regard to the third sphere of Sterba's analysis, the gift, of course, has no "peculiarities of pronunciation and mannerisms." It has color, shape, price, design, and other attributes, some of which have already been alluded to. In this respect, the gift is more like the printed word than like speech, for print, too, deprives us of much of the *how* of expression. However, valuable information can be obtained by observing the social setting in which the gift is given — that is, what the giver and receiver say and how they say it, if the gift is on time or late, how it is wrapped, the nature of the accompanying card, etc. For example, a young man who was graduating high school and planned to go away to college received a gift which might have been deemed appropriate and an expression of good wishes — it was an electric instrument for putting a crease in plants. However, it arrived long after the boy had gone away to college, the gift

was not wrapped, the box was torn, and the electric cord showed signs of wear. There was no message of good wishes; only the names of the donors accompanied the gift. Certainly, everything about the *manner* in which this gift was given belied any good wishes which the *content* of the gift might have conveyed.

With the foregoing illustrations, one can see that the gift, like speech, has considerable communicative function. However, the objection might be raised that while this analysis may be true for the illuminating gifts in our discussion, these formulations do not apply to *all* gifts. In this regard we may quote Freud's (6) comment regarding the application of his concepts to *all* slips of the tongue. He said, "... as often as one investigates a case of a slip of the tongue, it reduces itself to this type of explanation. But, on the other hand, one cannot prove that a slip of the tongue cannot occur without this mechanism." The problem, of course, lies in the difficulty of collecting data about the giving situation which are adequate fully to understand the gift.

There are still other similarities between language and gifts as means of communication. Language has many rules which limit somewhat the speaker's freedom to express his inner self. English, for example, demands certain word orders, inflections, etc. which, even in a slip can be altered only in a limited way. These limits become more obvious when we see them violated in psychotic speech. And, in our society, there are many phrases, such as "Thank you" or "I'm very glad to have met you" which are deemed appropriate in certain situations. Now, there are many gift situations where custom prescribes a certain type of gift, and the freedom of expression is somewhat curtailed. Thus, one does not give a box of chocolates at a baby shower; the situation demands a baby gift. But even here there is considerable latitude in the type of baby gift which is selected.

An interesting demonstration of the curtailment of individual expression by the demands of the social situation is described by Blake et al. (3). They found that people tend to donate an amount of money (for a going-away gift in an

office) which equals that which they think the average person is giving; that is, they attempt to give an "appropriate" amount. The authors point out that here, the giver desires to be like the others — to give the "right" amount; and that, in order to do this, he must form some opinion about what the others are giving. There is, of course, ample opportunity for more expressive elements to enter into the communication if the donor over- or underestimates the amount the others are giving. However, the important point to be emphasized here is that, in many cases, the type of gift is "demanded" by the particular situation.

Other limitations of the medium are imposed by the selection of gifts available, and, at times by the amount the donor can afford to pay. However, here again, there is usually sufficient latitude to allow the more personal, expressive elements to emerge. The selection of gifts available can be considerably narrowed if the donor overlooks certain articles, or if he approaches the task of purchasing the gift with such lack of enthusiasm that he quickly "gets tired of shopping" or confines his search to only one store. This donor is liable to "settle" for an obviously inferior gift (thereby expressing his distaste — "You are really not worth bothering too much about"), or he will attempt to avoid involvement by giving a limit-bound, conventional gift.

One such limit-bound gift is money. One five-dollar bill is just like another. In its very conventionality, however, lies the significance of the communication in the gift. When the giver is anxious about his relationship with the receiver and does not wish to expose his feelings to himself or to the other person, he may choose money as a means of attempting to avoid expression. Abraham (1) called attention to the use of money as "substitutive gratification." Those who give money "in the vague feeling that they are not giving the right gift in a qualitative sense . . . exaggerate it in a quantitative one . . . The spending of money forms a substitute for the sexual transference which their neurosis forbids and at the same time serves as a bulwark against neurotic disturbances." We see this in the situation where the donor

mentally thinks of several possible gifts but rejects them all for various "reasons" and decides to give money as a way out of the dilemma.

In other cases, one might give money to a casual acquaintance; here the gift expresses the impersonality of the relationship. Of course, we cannot deny that there are some situations where money is the most appropriate gift. Here again, limitations on the communicative value of the gift are imposed by social demands for a particular medium of expression. But there are also other, more interpersonal money-giving situations where, for example, by giving a large amount of money, a person may communicate his feeling of power and station (or combat feelings of inferiority), and he may thereby attempt to reduce the station of the recipient.

Thus far, we have considered the significance of the gift as a means of expression by the donor. A very important, but much less emphasized determinant in communication is the role of the receiver. Kasper (8) has shown this very clearly by demonstrating that a patient states one chief complaint to an internist and quite a different one to a psychiatrist. This phenomenon undoubtedly also operates in gift situations. The gift is not only a means whereby the donor expresses himself, but frequently a particular type of gift is "demanded" by the role of the receiver. It is not difficult to think of situations where we try to "fit" the gift to the recipient. To the young scholar we give a book, while we choose a baseball glove for the young athlete. These gifts will be received with delight showing that the donor has been aware of the role of the recipient and that the receiver accepts this role. However, if we give the book to the athlete he is likely to be disappointed or even angry at being forced into a role he does not wish to assume. In this case, we (the donors) are expressing dissatisfaction in the way we perceive the recipient. Our gift is partly determined by our reaction to his role as an athlete and our desire to modify this role.

The function of the role of the recipient in determining the gift was implied above in the discussion of my friend's

gift to her daughter. There is obviously a conflict between the daughter's desires and the role in which the mother wishes to cast her. The daughter was disappointed with her gift largely because she resented her mother's attempts to use her as a means of attracting the father — she did not want to be "fashionable" in this manner and for this purpose. But the mother, for her own reasons, must continue to perceive her daughter in this role — a role so well expressed by the gift.

An interesting example of the influence of the role of the recipient was related to me recently by a friend, the daughter of a psychoanalyst. Recently, her father became seriously ill. She gave him a gift of three vases which were joined together. Her brother, independently, presented his father with a set of three matching glass vases. A friend of the family gave the man a set of three figurines. My friend told me that her father had been struck by the fact that he had received so many gifts containing three items. The sexual symbolism impressed him greatly. Unfortunately, I am not well enough acquainted with these people to gather the data upon which a secure interpretation of the interactions can rest; however, I believe that these gifts of three arriving at the same time were not given by chance. Indeed, the recipient, himself, tells us that he recognized the role in which he was cast. The influence of the receiver, here, undoubtedly operated on an unconscious level, and the clue to understanding it came, not from the donors, but from the recipient.

Thus, we see that the gift, like speech, is a vehicle of communication which expresses the dynamic interplay between donor and recipient. Despite certain limits put on this medium by the demands of our culture, there is often much to be learned about an interpersonal relationship by studying this vehicle of expression and the part it plays in the communication.

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Death and Situation

by

Maurice Natanson

As an "essay in phenomenological ontology"¹ Sartre's *L'Être et le néant* is concerned with the structures of Being in so far as Being presents itself; i.e., insofar as it is given in experience. As a phenomenology, *Being and Nothingness* deals only with presentations, and as a descriptive enterprise, it cannot handle metaphysical problems. Thus Sartre gives us extensive descriptive analyses of the self, the body, the various concrete relations with the alter ego (love, language, desire, etc.), but he does not attempt to analyze questions of the ultimate origin, purpose, or meaning of reality. Since the character of his investigation is descriptive, and since Sartre's method takes the standpoint of the individual consciousness, the question of what is within and outside *our* experience becomes transposed into the problem of what is within and outside *my* experience, *I* as experiencing consciousness. What is within the experience of my fellowman may be in principle inaccessible to my direct experience and vice versa. A crucial case in point is the problem of the experience of death. My experience of death is always my experience of the death of the Other, the death of a fellowman. The experience of my death as a phenomenon, Sartre claims, can only be a phenomenon for the experience of the Other, whether that Other is friend, relation, associate, stranger, or part of the anonymous "public." If "my" death is thus outside my possible experience, in what sense is my death a possible object for my phenomenological investigation?

In endeavouring to consider this question, I believe that an analysis of Sartre's philosophy of death may be of interest and of value in several ways: first, we may clarify a vital point of difference between the thought of Sartre and Heideg-

ger, philosophers sometimes taken as expressing equivalent positions; second, we may come to a more careful understanding of the fundamental Sartrean concept of "situation" with which his idea of death is connected; third, we may implicitly come to a more penetrating appreciation of the problem of death as a theme of phenomenological philosophy. I propose, then, to turn to a brief exposition of Sartre's views on death, to proceed to an examination of the correlated but more fundamental concept of "situation," to offer certain critical remarks on Sartre's treatment of the problem in the light of his total ontology, and finally to turn to the larger theme of a phenomenological approach to the meaning of death in human experience.

II

Although it is well known that Heidegger has made much of his idea of *sein zum Tode*, of the emergence of the authentic person from the condition of anonymity (*das Man*), it is pertinent to note that in this regard Sartre does not follow Heidegger; to the contrary, he clearly and thoroughly dissents from the Heideggerian position. Sartre's dissent is occasioned by a rejection of Heidegger's underlying thesis that *my* death may become, in a direct sense, a phenomenon in *my* experience. To understand his reasons for rejecting Heidegger's philosophy of death, it is necessary to summarize Sartre's general conception of death.²

For Sartre (1) *my* death is not an experience of which I can ever be aware, for awareness is a life-characteristic: death means absolute and final cessation of my awareness; (2) my death, as phenomenon, is a possible experience only for a fellowman: it is a structure of "being-for-the-Other"³; (3) I cannot meditate on my life from the standpoint of death, since that standpoint would have to be that of a fellowman, a standpoint denied me in principle⁴; (4) I can meditate on my possible future death from the standpoint of my life, but such meditation fails to reveal my death, it only refers me to the existence of the Other, of some fellowman for whom that possible future death will be a possible experience; (5) my finitude and my death must be differentiated: the former

is an ontological structure (which does not derive from death) and so is an object for my phenomenological investigation; the latter is not.

Sartre has defined "being for-itself" (*l'être pour-soi*) or, most simply, the self, as a principle of negativity. The self, understood from different aspects as human subjectivity, consciousness, etc., is the "being for which being is in question in its being,"⁵ i.e., the being which is constantly, ceaselessly undergoing a nihilating transition and alteration which places its very nature in question. My past, what I have done and been, is, so long as I live, continually being reconstructed and reinterpreted by me as well as by others in terms of a present self which is itself undergoing change in the light of an anticipated future which shapes and conditions the intentions underlying my present projects. The self is *pro*-jected, it is, temporally, a forward moving structure whose present being is a "nihilation" (*néantisation*) defined by the anticipated future, so that without that future the present has no status. Most simply: the self is only to the extent that what it tends toward establishes the very condition of that "is." Thus, Sartre says, it is because the self is the being which always claims an after, that there is no place for death in the being which the self is.⁶ As a self my being exists in the stream of life activities moving toward the future: my death cannot be any part of this structure of being.

"My project toward *a* death is comprehensible (suicide, martyrdom, heroism)," Sartre writes, "but not the project toward *my* death."⁷ *My* death would mean the unfulfillment or the collapse of my projects, it would place my projects in the hands of Others whose standpoint I cannot take; *a* death is a meaningful aspect of my projects, for it is only the concept of death as such that is involved. But is not the difference between *my* death and *a* death Heidegger's problem of the distinction between authenticity and anonymity? Here we come to Sartre's specific criticism of Heidegger's philosophy of death. Sartre writes:

"Heidegger . . . begins by individualizing the death of each of us, by indicating to us that it is the death of a *person*, of an individual, the 'only thing that nobody can do for me'; then he utilizes this incomparable individuality which he has conferred upon death from the 'Dasein' in order to individualize the 'Dasein' itself: it is by projecting itself freely toward its ultimate possibility that the 'Dasein' will reach authentic existence and will break away from the every day banality in order to attain the irreplaceable oneness of the person. But there is a circle here; how, in effect, prove that death has this individuality and the power to confer it.'"⁸

The "circle" indicated is really this: the experience of my death is the ground of my authenticity; the authentic I replaces the I of anonymity, *das Man*, yet the individuality of death presupposes my capacity to recognize it as unique. How is the I of *das Man*, the inauthentic banal self, able to appreciate the uniqueness of the experience of its own death? Sartre concludes that the phenomenon of *my* death, in so far as it can be entertained at all as an idea, is meaningful only in the same sense in which *my* love, *my* vows, or *my* emotions are *mine*, i.e., as defined by my subjectivity. "Thus, from this point of view," Sartre writes, "the most banal love is, like death, irreplaceable and unique, no one can love for me."⁹ *My* death remains then, for Sartre, the possible experience of the Other, an experience beyond my consciousness, and to me forever inaccessible.

III

But Sartre's rejection of Heidegger's philosophy of death is not, in itself, his major concern. Indeed, Sartre's own analysis of death is not an independent topic of inquiry nor a fundamental theme of *Being and Nothingness*. It is introduced as a clarifying agent for a broader problem, one to which Sartre has devoted a considerable amount of attention, the problem of "situation." The analysis of death will, in part, he writes, "permit a clearer conception of what a 'situation' is."¹⁰ To be a self, according to Sartre, is to be in a "situation": the self is its situation. As self I am: first, "an existant in the midst of other existants"¹¹; second, an existant born into a world which has a history, societal organization,

etc.¹²; third, an existant who determines the rapport of utensility or of adversity of the realities which surround me in the world; fourth, an existant who constitutes my situation through the selection of the goals toward which my projects are aimed; fifth, an existant who is only in the face of the not-yet future which conditions as a limit what is given in my experience.

My situation is, therefore, a complex dialectically generated out of both objective and subjective conditions: "the situation cannot be subjective, for it is neither the sum nor the unity of the *impressions* which things make upon us; it is the *things themselves* and myself among the things."¹³ But the situation "can no more be objective, in the sense in which it would be a pure given which the subject would verify without being in any way engaged in the system thus constituted."¹⁴ Rather, the situation is a "*relation of being*"¹⁵ between the facticity of the world and the "*illumination*"¹⁶ of that facticity by the subject. In this manner, situation is defined by the self in a double sense: by the actual being of the self and also by that which the self has not yet become.

IV

We have stated that Sartre treats the experience of death as subordinate and contributive to the larger problem of "situation." Let us now reverse his procedure and see the relationship between the two, taking the problem of death as primary. In what way does his idea of "situation" clarify his idea of death?

My situation is always *concrete*. The universal ends I choose for my life are chosen from my particular standpoint, they reflect *my* ambition, *my* hope, *my* struggle. The very selection of the "life of a professional man," for example, is made in the light of *my* conception of what such a life implies and involves. But in addition, the degree to which I realize the "life of a professional man" is expressed in the concrete situations of my existence. In this manner we come to the relationship of death and situation within the context of the concrete events of my life.

Sartre recalls Kafka's story of the merchant who comes

to plead a case at the castle: "a terrible guard bars his entrance. He dares not pass beyond, waits and dies in waiting. At the hour of death, he asks the guardian: 'How does it happen that I was the only one to wait?' and the guardian answers him: 'This gate was made only for you.'"¹⁷ And Sartre adds: "each one makes for himself his own gate."¹⁸ As self I do not choose my own death (though I may choose *a* death, as we have seen), for *my* death is an ontologically transcendent phenomenon available only to the Other; rather, death as such is an *a priori* condition of the human reality, the sheer facticity of what is given in the human condition: "it is absurd that we are born," Sartre writes, "it is absurd that we die."¹⁹ But every general objective aspect of my situation, death included, is constituted in so far as the self "makes a human reality exist as species."²⁰ Though I do not "create" death as an *a priori* facticity of the human situation, there is a human situation only to the extent that there are selves who constitute such worlds. The *a priori* of death, then, is the condition not of *my* death but of my finitude. To be finite is to choose one end to the exclusion of others, for the very conception of "exclusion" involves the choice of *this* and no other, a choice that establishes my self as defined by the irreversibility of temporality.²¹ Thus death is an *a priori* condition defining my situation as finite, but I choose my situation and that choice is within the situation of my choosing. I cannot choose the objective condition of finitude, but without my self-constituted world that *a priori* would remain abortive.

V

Taken together, then, death and situation, for Sartre, are mutually revealing structures which illuminate man's being; but situation transposes death into the phenomenological givenness of finitude. My death is a phenomenon for the situation of *Others*, of a situation that transcends my existence. And if we now add that finitude cannot be derived from the conception of death we are left with Sartre's reduction of the problem: man, as *pour-soi*, is a being whose finitude defines his situation and whose situation defines his finitude;

death remains only as an *a priori* limit of the human condition.

This reduction of death to finitude is open, I would suggest, to a number of criticisms. First, to speak of the phenomenon of death is necessarily to locate those meanings which present themselves directly to my awareness as observer of the other's death. Even if the other dies-for-me, his death is independent, as phenomenon, of the causal categories that make up the physical or medical definition of death. My friend's death does not consist for me in the biological fact of cessation of heartbeat or respiration or the decay of his tissues; it is my friend who has died, not his body. If the phenomenon of my friend's death is the complexus of meanings signified by his dying, then those meanings are available to me with respect to my own death. I need not be the witness of my death, the guardian of my corpse, to locate the phenomenon of my death. But there is a second point to be made: it is not possible, I think, to derive the meaning of finitude from the self alone, apart from the structure of death. For the self to be finite means that it must move forward temporally to a point of cessation that is more than the end of a formal series: that point of cessation which is the terminus of consciousness is my death. To be finite is to be limited by death; to derive finitude from man's being alone is to conceive of an "end" without that ground which makes the very conception of man's "end" possible. There is, finally, a third point of criticism: Sartre makes of death an *a priori* limit of man's situation. But this device merely returns us to the problem of the constitution of the situational *a priori*. Since the self ultimately constitutes the way in which its situation is structured, death as an *a priori* is returned, full circle, to the immanence of consciousness. Death and situation, in my own view, are comprehensible as aspects of an integral experiential reality which is phenomenologically given. In this respect, I think Heidegger is closer to the truth than Sartre. But rather than play one doctrine against the other, I think it more profitable at this time to turn to the completely valid question implicitly raised by both philosophers: In what sense is a phenom-

ology of death possible? Perhaps the best way of approaching this question is to abandon the special, often tangled, terminology of Sartre and Heidegger and turn directly to the phenomena themselves.

As soon as we are born, Heidegger recalls in *Sein und Zeit*, we are old enough to die. The awareness of death may come for the child through the death of a pet, the sight of an animal killed on the road, or through the experience of a death in the family. However it comes, there comes along with it the uncanny, almost insidious realization that the child too will die. Thus, death enters the world and gives a shock to innocence from which innocence can never recover. The child's questions about death are the adult's questions more honestly stated and the philosopher's questions naively discovered. "Will I die too?" asks the child; "Why must I die?" "What does it mean to die?" And the simple truth is that there are no final answers to these questions, though there are myths and dreams and desperate hopes evinced in the answers children get. Our evasions are decisive evidence of our metaphysical illiteracy.

But death for the adult world is no less the ambivalent problematic of our daily lives. It is not necessary to turn to Heidegger to locate the immediacy of the issues. Heidegger himself makes reference to Tolstoi's remarkable story "The Death of Ivan Ilyich." We could trace the problem in quite other directions as well. Writing in 1915, twelve years before the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, one investigator discusses the spiritual atmosphere of Europe at the time of the First World War:

a "factor to which I attribute our present sense of estrangement in this once lovely and congenial world," he writes, "is the disturbance that has taken place in our attitude towards death, an attitude to which hitherto we have clung so fast. This attitude was far from straightforward. We were of course prepared to maintain that death was the necessary outcome of life, that everyone owes a debt to Nature and must expect to pay the reckoning — in short, that death was natural, undeniable and unavoidable. In reality, however, we were accustomed to behave as if it were otherwise. We

displayed an unmistakable tendency to 'shelve' death, to eliminate it from life. We tried to hush it up . . . at bottom no one believes in his own death.'²²

The author of this statement is not an existential philosopher but a psychoanalytic philosopher, Sigmund Freud.

From childhood through our adult lives, then, the problem of making sense of life by making sense of death is a primary obligation in a purely descriptive sense; for whether we like it or not, death is the horizon of our being. And it is perhaps as horizon that we can interpret it phenomenologically. When I come to terms with reality, I admit the overpowering truth of my total human situation: that I am a being born into a world in which I am destined to grow older and to die. My being in this world is along a horizon of action and belief that includes my death in a world that transcends me. The first evidence, phenomenologically, that is given to me of this horizon of death is, I would suggest (though I cannot develop it here), a sense of *uncanniness* which haunts the experienced elements of my familiar surroundings.²³ The uncanny is appresented, we might say, with the familiar. Each familiar object, person, or event carries with it the possibility of the sinister and the strange. If the familiar is rooted in life, the uncanny is its *Doppelgänger*. And though it may be perfectly "natural" that plants and animals and other human beings die, it remains strange beyond comparison that this will *really* happen to me. Here, then, I believe is a root meaning of the experience of death; the uncanny thrusts us instantaneously within the horizon of death.

These remarks lead to no special conclusion. As Landsberg says in his essay on "The Experience of Death," the question of the meaning of death to the human being as a person admits of no conclusion, "for we are dealing with the very mystery of man, taken from a certain aspect."²⁴ And he adds: "every real problem in philosophy contains all the others in the unity of mystery."²⁵ Our effort has been directed to the articulation of a problem rather than to its solution. In this sense, the central contribution of Sartre and

Heidegger to the clarification of these issues is their recovery of a philosophical problem that has been almost lost to contemporary thought in a scientific age. Whatever their technical inadequacies, they have succeeded not only in relocating an authentic problem but in directing our attention to its living urgency. It has been a long time since Montaigne reminded us of Cicero's injunction that to philosophize is to learn how to die. In our age the same truth is expressed by Rilke:

"Lord, give to each man his unique death."

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NOTES

1. the subtitle of Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Être et le néant*, Paris, 1943.
2. *L'Être et le néant*, pp. 615-638.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 631.
4. According to Sartre, I can know the Other only as object for my subjectivity or I may experience myself as object for the Other's subjectivity, but I cannot know the Other as subjectivity for my subjectivity; hence I cannot take the standpoint of the Other as subjectivity. See *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 624.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 617.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 618.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 633.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Cf. Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*, New York, 1948, pp. 59-60.
13. *L'Être et le néant*, p. 633.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 634.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 635.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 631.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 636.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 631.

22. Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts on War and Death," in *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, London, 1949, pp. 304-305.
23. Again, Freud's essay on "The 'Uncanny'," *Ibid.*, pp. 368-407, is remarkably suggestive, although he does not consider the implications of the problem with respect to death.
24. Paul-Louis Landsberg, *The Experience of Death & The Moral Problem of Suicide*, New York, 1953, p. 1.
25. *Ibid.*



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